THE

CONTRAST,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MATILDA," "YES AND NO,"

&c. &c.

Take but degree away—untune that string,
And hark! what discord follows.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE CONTRAST.

CHAPTER I.

Knights and dames I sing,
Such as the times may furnish: 'tis a flight
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing
Plumed by Longinus, or the Stagyrite:
The difficulty lies in colouring,
(Keeping the due proportions still in sight,)
With nature, manners which are artificial,
And rendering general that which is especial.

BYRON.

He's justice of the peace, ay, and rotulorum.

SHAKSPEARE.

SOME years had passed over Sir North Saunders' head since we were last in his company, and yet we shall find him much as we left him, neither richer nor poorer, wiser nor better, nor,

except "quoad" baptismal register, much older than when, upon first establishing himself for the summer season at Hornscliff Abbey, he had accompanied Castleton and Lady Madelina to Morden Bay. He still looked much the same; he could still eat as much, and walk as little. True, in the interval one great epoch had occurred in the life of a politician of his calibre; *he had sworn off*, or, to explain it in other words to the uninitiated, he was now turned sixty: a fact which, when sworn to, gives a member of Parliament an exemption from attendance on committees, it being "in the wisdom of the legislature" thought that to rise by ten o'clock in the forenoon would be very injurious at that advanced age, though to sit up all night, and decide the most important questions at five o'clock in the morning, is a duty constantly exacted

Coeval, however, with this survival of part

of his senatorial functions, he had assumed new provincial duties. He had lately acted as a justice of the peace! in the jargon of the sessions, he had sued out his *dedimus*, and become one of the *quorum*, a phraseology probably retained to contradict the proverbial assertion, that translation of the dead languages is of benefit to country gentlemen.

It may be thought a little late for an elderly gentleman, turned sixty, to take upon himself, for the first time, the complicated duties of administering the laws; but then it should be recollected that he had passed the last forty in making them, and from the singular ease with which he had, during that period, executed his part in the former process, it is no wonder that he thought himself perfectly adequate to the subordinate department he now undertook. It may not be understood with what sort of "hocus pocus" facility most of the

enactments, on the construction of which Sir North had undertaken to decide, had become the law of the land. Provided they touched not the interests of any one within hearing, the whole process seems to consist in a bit of parchment being subjected to the magic touch of a certain number of men with wigs on their heads and gowns on their backs, a certain number of times; true, it is also said to be read a certain number of times, which, however, consists in one of the gownsmen mumbling the first unmeaning half line in a tone somewhat lower than that in which every voice is talking around him. The chief of the gownsmen then, in somewhat the same tone, invites all of one opinion to say "ay," and all of the other "no;" an invitation to which, whilst all are equally unconscious to what it alludes, no one can pay the slightest attention. Having undergone this mystic touch the prescribed

number of times in one room, it for once gets into the hands of a man without either gown or wig, who, with sundry "kotous," carries it into another room, where it is again subject, a similar number of times, to the same touching process, when at last all the wigs being now collected in one room, one of them stands in the middle, produces a few strange sounds of barbarous French, and the magic parchment at once becomes the law of the land, without ninety-nine in a hundred, upon whose authority it has so become, ever having heard more of it than the cabalistic syllable, equally applicable to all, of "Whereas."

The fact is, from the day of the Druids down to our own inclusive, there never was any mummery more unmeaning than that with which an unopposed law is passed through the British legislature. Therefore, though from being constantly at the beck of every

succeeding whipper-in of the Treasury, Sir North had, perhaps, more frequently than any other individual, bowed bills up to the bar of the House of Lords; he was not by any means aware how much he had by that contributed to complicate the new duties he had undertaken, off hand, and expected to execute by intuition. But here, let not the reader be alarmed: I am not going to start off with one of the sweeping invectives, with some so popular, against the "great unpaid;" such a digression would be out of place here, if I thought it in reason anywhere. But my own opinion is, that it is a system which rather requires to be regulated than superseded. I by no means think that all is obtained that is required, because the magistrate is unpaid: but neither do I think that all would be remedied if he was paid. I do not think it by any means certain, that this change alone would

at once insure oracles of wisdom, and miracles of wit, all over the country. If, too, their appointments are all to emanate from the crown, I am much surprised that any, who entertain a constitutional jealousy of the executive, should tolerate a plan, which either must be made the means of increased patronage to the dependants of Government and their supporters amongst the local aristocracy, or if there ever should be a minister who should be disposed to drill all under him into a sort of military subordination, would enable him to organize a system, if not of police espionage, at least, of ministerial surveillance. "Surveillance!" The word is not English; because the thing itself has never been naturalized amongst us. And next to the consideration of how the stipendiary magistrates are to be appointed, comes that of from what class are they to be selected. Probably from amongst

those educated for the profession of the law. But you could never expect that the infinite number of appointments necessary, would be such as to tempt men of eminence or ambition to accept them, so that everywhere you must be content with mediocrity of talent and attainments. Added to this, is the name of lawyer, whether deservedly or not, so popular among the lower orders, as to make such a change desired by those for whose advantage it is supposed to be proposed? Whatever the defects of the present system may be, I am sure much good is frequently effected by the attention willingly paid to the amicable recommendations of him who is looked up to in his immediate neighbourhood, as uniting the character of magistrate with that of kind protector, or benevolent landlord. Far, however, am I from thinking that the present system is perfect. Many, I am aware, are the instances both of injustice

and ignorance, which it has fostered under the head of injustice. The "game laws," administered by the very persons most interested against the accused party, have led to much capricious tyranny. But abolish the game laws (as you have begun to do); destroy the unjust law, and you remove the temptation to injustice in the administration. As to ignorance, too, I am afraid that there are but too many lamentable instances; but why, then, is the most complicated and important business of administering the laws, supposed to be the only one for which no previous practice or preparation is required? A diploma is expected for medicine; a degree or examination, for taking orders as a priest. Why, as most of our magistrates are of the class usually educated at one of the Universities, why should not a course of English law be engrafted upon the many less useful things

exacted as necessary to a degree? or why should not a certificate from a separate college, established for that purpose, be required from every one wishing to act as a magistrate? Would it be very unreasonable to expect that some little fitness should be ascertained, before duties were undertaken, in which the interests of so many, and amongst them those the least able to defend themselves, are involved. But nothing of this kind was required of Sir North Saunders; and he had entered upon the whole career of "summoning, passing, committing, and certifying," without undergoing any other *test* than the one then exacted from all, for the preservation of religious intolerance. Through life it had been the maxim of Sir North Saunders, to unite as much as possible the outward appearance of a dissipated man of pleasure, with the solid advantages of a shrewd man of business; and as a principal ingredient

in maintaining his first character, he was always very conspicuous in his devotion to some one of the reigning beauties of the day. Not that his gallantries were ever of a nature either to endanger the character of their object, or at all to interfere with any more serious affair in which she might at the time be engaged;—on the contrary, his gratification always seemed complete when his house was proposed for any little flirting assignation, on the part of the person whom he for the time admired. And this was a favour not unfrequently granted to him, being on many accounts found particularly convenient; for whilst the decorous character of the society, which he united both in town and country, was maintained by the tutelary presence of some of the most rigid dowagers of his own party and connexion, always anxious for the support of splendid establishments, whether domestic or political, and

attracted by the orthodoxy of his creed and kitchen, there was a most complete absence of all constraint in a society where every one thought they rather honoured the host, by condescending to partake of his hospitalities. Not that Sir North was without his "toad-eaters;"—where is the man of forty thousand a-year that ever was?—but it was so completely the tone of the house to take every thing Sir North did for his friends, as a matter of course, and as their due, that there was never any openly avowed admiration of any thing, and his veriest creatures only carried on a contraband trade in flattery, smuggling their contingent of subserviency at a favourable moment, when unobserved; and even these, to whom his hospitality was a convenience, and who had no alternative between the Baronet and his Grace Humphrey, would, without scruple, criticise the most *recherché* of his *entrées*, and make be-

lieve a bottle was corked to show they were not obliged to drink it.

The party at present assembled consisted, as usual, of a strange melange, composed of well-paid placemen in search of amusement during the recess, and needy men of fashion seeking subsistence through the dead months; of dowagers hunting marrying men, and dandies hunting married women; but amongst those were to be found, some whom Sir North had contrived to persuade to visit him, who were rather above the class usually collected at a house whose ostentatious hospitality was too much ridiculed to be very *recherché*. And in this list was to be placed Lady Gayland, the young widow mentioned in Castleton's letter to his friend, as a continental acquaintance. She had lately returned to her native country, and had accepted the invitation to Hornscliff Abbey, eagerly pressed by Sir North. As she possess-

ed too much good spirits to be really bored anywhere; and too much good sense to affect to be so at the caprice of others, and quite wit enough to avail herself, as a matter of amusement, and in a good-natured way, of the ridicule of Sir North's character; she found such a residence for a short time, well calculated to suit her easy humour, and independent situation.

CHAPTER II.

Her chief resource was in her own high spirit,
Which judged mankind at their due estimation;
And for coquetry she disdained to wear it,
Secure of admiration; its impression
Was faint as if an every-day possession.

BYRON.

But then her face
So lovely, yet so arch; so full of mirth,
The overflowings of an innocent heart.

IT will be equally impossible, I fear, to give the reader of these pages an idea of the charm of Lady Gayland's character, whether he is allowed to guess his way to its developement through the mazes of contradictory traits which

the events themselves may incidentally present, and so be left puzzled and perplexed, as Lord Castleton himself was in his former acquaintance with her; or whether the more arduous task shall be undertaken of giving him a clue through the medium of introductory description. Yet, how to tie down to terms of fixed description, that which, if it was as brilliant, was also as changeful as the sun-beam! How to exemplify that which, at all times, was unlike any thing else, or how to describe that which was often most unlike itself! I might, it is true, vaunt the undeniable beauty of her fine features, expatiate on the brilliancy of her full dark eye; or detail the form of that noble brow which seemed the chosen throne of thought. Yet how, even by this means, to give any idea of that strength of varied expression, which, as the occasion required, even before the ready words had risen to her lips, stamped upon her countenance the perfect pro-

totype of indignation, ridicule, or sympathy! If I were even to recall some of the sallies of her playful wit, they might, thus stiffly recorded, no longer be the same as when flowing forth the spontaneous burst of high spirits and buoyant fancy; and seem, perhaps, abrupt and harsh when deprived of the accompanying sweet smile and soft tone, which could even blunt the sting of satire.

On the other hand, it might be difficult to persuade those who felt not that her movements were the result of some higher impulse, which spurned the usual rules of drawing-room refinement—how impossible it was that under any circumstances she could ever be ungraceful, and such as she was, when most unlike every one else, she seemed least aware of it herself. Her's was the singularity of genius; not the genius of singularity. If she was often in word and deed what some might say they would not imitate, still oftener was she what others owned

they could not emulate. And whilst many who knew her slightly, thought it was well for the world that there was no *second* Lady Gayland; all who knew her well, thought there was nothing which the world could not better spare than that one.

The morning after the events, described in the last Chapter, had happened at Morden Bay, a large party was assembled round the breakfast-table at Sir North's, and in the full enjoyment of the social meal; for though, contrary to his usual custom, their host had not yet appeared, his authority had been put in commission, as amongst the guests there were many who considered themselves quite at liberty to treat his servants as if they were their own.

"How I envy you your spirits, Lady Gayland!" drawled out that beshawled and draperied anatomy, Mrs. M'Angle, as she sat coiled up in one corner of the easy *fauteuil*,

which, as an invalid, had been provided for her. "I shan't be half awake these three hours yet; and you talk as gaily as if it was after midnight, instead of before noon."

"For my part," said Lady Gayland, "I never feel more alive than with the freshness of the morning dew upon my thoughts; I enjoy, above all the other *agrémens* of a country party, a social breakfast-table. But where is he '*who is the cause of mirth in others?*'"

"Our host has undertaken the part of Banquo," rejoined his humble friend, Mr. Spencer, pointing to the vacant chair of Sir North.

"Perhaps we are too noisy for him; he is accustomed ten months in the year to a solitary meal, dividing his attention between his sodden muffin, and newspaper done dry at a quick fire; but, after all, I believe here he is."

But it was not Sir North, but an individual

whose entrance was likely to produce, amongst the other guests, a much stronger sensation than "one so common hacknied in the eyes of men," as their much despised host. The person in question was equipped, as to his lower man, in the most correct shooting costume; but the jacket had not as yet replaced the accustomed blue coat with royal buttons, crossed up to his chin, many loops for sundry stars being seen on his left breast. He was well known to all the half-fed placemen, who now *officiously*, perhaps *officially*, cleared him his place at the breakfast-table, and who, though they would gladly have picked up HIS crumbs, brushed THEIR OWN out of his way. Indeed, though all there might not previously have come in personal contact with him, who did not know, by name, The Right Honourable the Earl of Stayinmore, K.G., G.C.B., G G.C., the proprietor of the three snug little boroughs

of Singlecot, Bankcumwall, and Old Summertemple, and one of the confidential advisers of the Crown at that day? His Lordship had, through life, observed great judgment in establishing the reputation of his wisdom by his silence—and of his consequence, by his civility. But he contrived by his silence often to place more restraint upon opinion than others by a direct negative, looking the while as "if I could contradict if it was worth my while;" and his civility was so ostentatiously condescending, that to some it was more offensive than would have been the actual assumption of superiority. One of those who saw it in this light was Lady Gayland; and it was evident to the blindest of bystanders, even whilst the diplomatic assurances, &c. of the morning acknowledgements, were going on between them, that there would very soon be a "war of opinion." The ser-

viles formed a royalist militia round Lord S. whilst all the unquiet spirits looked to Lady Gayland for encouragement.

Lord Stayinmore was, however, determined if possible to propitiate his beautiful antagonist by the studied courtesy of his morning address to her; and disregarding the attempts of his satellites to fix him in their system by offering vacant chairs as he bowed his way up the table, he at last deposited himself in one just opposite Lady Gayland, saying, with a curvature of the body and an inflexion of the voice, which became so substantial an impersonation of the shade of Chesterfield, "Here 's metal more attractive."

"New and true," muttered Lady Gayland; adding more loudly, and in a manner it was impossible to say positively was meant for ridicule: "'I kiss thy hand, but not flattery, Cæsar,'" "There," said she, turning to her neighbour

Mr. Spencer; "there is a quotation repaid in kind, as original, and more sincere."

As there was nothing in the world, next to the loss of his three Boroughs of Singlecot, Bankcumwall, and Old Summertemple, which Lord Stayinmore so particularly dreaded as the idea of being laughed at, warned by a certain "lurking devil in her eye," he did not again address Lady Gayland, but confined himself for some time to condescending commonplaces amongst his other neighbours. But this prolonged armistice was, as other prolonged armistices may (not a thousand years ago) have been, displeasing to these bystanders, who thought they might gain, and could not lose, by the actual conflict of the contending parties. And Mr. Spencer, who was sitting next her, viewed it peculiarly in this light.

Peter Alexander Spencer was rather, in his way, a character: he had been ever since he

left school a "rising young man," in every other respect except bodily height, which had remained stationary at *five feet one;* but like many little men, he had a most exalted idea of his own importance, though with great power of bending to the weaknesses of others, when it suited his object. He was remarkable for another thing; not only always using the longest words, but adding still more to their natural length by protracted pronunciation. He had arrived there the day before, unable to resist Sir North's offer of an opportunity to try his double-barrelled gun, though very proud of the career that had just opened to him, by being called to the Bar. His arrival had much exhilarated Lady Gayland. I am afraid it must be owned, that she dearly loved a butt, and there was in the assumed importance, and natural insignificance of Mr. Spencer, much, that irresistibly cried out to any one

with the slightest sense of the ridiculous. "Even if you love me, laugh at me!" She was constantly, in the effervescence of her merry mood, venting forth many bad jokes about "short Spencers," and "long robes," which she would have been very sorry to have heard repeated, and which would have been as soon forgotten by every one else as by herself, but for the intervention of Spencer's friend, Mr. Middleman, who shared Spencer's britscha down, at the allotted cost of one *post-horse*, and half a post-boy. Middleman was one of those persons who make their way in the world by constantly repeating such sentences as "Did you hear what Lady Gayland said of Spencer! Capital! eh?" Thus storing up the superabundant produce of more fertile imaginations, and retailing it forth, at moments of conversational scarcity, thereby gaining his own little percentage of attention; which he

achieved in this instance by repeating, whenever he thought it would entail most ridicule on his friend and fellow-traveller, what Lady Gayland had only lightly uttered in a moment of thoughtlessness.

CHAPTER III.

A beauteous ripple of the brilliant stream
Of rank and youth, though purer than the rest.

BYRON.

Great things were now to be achieved at table.

* * *

But oh, the scenes mid which they met and parted—
The thoughts, the recollections, sweet and bitter—
Th' Elysian dreams of lovers when they loved—
Who shall restore them? * * *

IN the mean time, Mr. Spencer, whose general *toadying* turn was regulated in its particular application by the accidental propinquity of the moment, now drawled out, making as usual a prolonged note of each vowel, or a sort of appogiatura between it and its succeeding consonant,

"D—*o*—*o* pray t—*o*rture him a l—*ee*tle. There's nothing so del—*i*ghtful as your persifl*a*—*a*—*ge*."

"But I'm not so sanguinary an amazon as to declare unprovoked war," replied she, "still, 'sotto voce,' his silence leaves me no pretence: he is determined to avail himself of the most literal application of the Italian proverb,

'In bocca chiusa non entran' mosche.'"

But even whilst she was thus declining any wanton act of hostility, a subject was fixed upon Lord Stayinmore, by one of his satellites, which was almost the only one on which he could then have been provoked so far to commit his opinion as to risk a contradiction.

The topic introduced was the conduct which ought to be pursued by the government of that day, upon one of those "bit by bit" measures of reform which then excited curiosity, and, if

not interest in itself, had, at least, divided opinion as to the effect the treatment of it might have upon the constantly recurring cry for parliamentary reform. Lord Stayinmore felt more deeply than he thought on this subject, and always expressed himself strongly upon it.

"It is the bounden duty," said he, "of every man who has been bred up in due estimation of the unparalleled blessings of our invaluable constitution, to make his immovable stand at once, arresting these erratic changes on the very threshold of their progress, nipping in the bud these flowery projects of alteration, choking and damming up, as I may say, this mischievous current of public opinion, even at its fountain head."

Lady Gayland, for the sake of herself as well as her hearers, had much rather have met her antagonist on some field where her wit might have given her more vantage ground of posi-

tion, than on the wide and level plains of political discussion, and here she was, therefore, determined not to be forced into a general action; but as she retired, she could not avoid a skirmishing diversion; and taking up his last words, "Stop, indeed, the current of public opinion at its fountain head!" she continued. "That puts me in mind of an incident I remember hearing last year amongst the *Yuoddling* hills of Switzerland. Shall I begin, 'Once upon a time——'

"Oh, pray do," exclaimed simultaneously half the breakfast-table.

"You have, most of you, seen those German *Stu*—dents in the *U—niversities* who are sedentary in the winter, but peripatetic all the summer, with waists like wasps, and faces like sheep, all lank locks and learning. One of these was taken to see the source of the Danube, when, whilst he pressed his palm against the

bubbling spring as it oozed through the cleft of the rock, he exclaimed, in a fit of geographical grandiloquence, 'I wonder what they'll think of that at Vienna?' What do you think they did think of that at Vienna, Lord Stayinmore?"

"Amusing! but how applicable?" condescendingly notified Lord Stayinmore, avoiding the question himself by interposing another.

"Oh, my dear Lord," replied Lady Gayland, "if it is mine to adorn the tale, it is not mine to point the moral; but, however, if you will make a Cassandra of me in spite of myself, and insist upon my 'laying bare my prophetic soul,' I should say that, if whilst you think you have the power, you attempt to impede the natural flow of popular feeling with those political bungs, Singlecot and Bankeumwall, which you now have at your fingers' ends, they will only be the more inevitably borne down with its headlong career; and that the majestic

stream of public opinion, swollen on all sides by tributary springs, will flow resistlessly onward, bearing on its triumphant waves the united wishes of a liberal government and a grateful people; and any such opposition as you now threaten, will then no more be felt, than was the impression of the pigmy fingers of the German student in the diminished waters of the Danube at Vienna!"

Lady Gayland had warmed with her subject, and had rattled on more than she had intended; but she had tact enough, in the midst of her rhapsody, to perceive evident intimations on the part of Lord Stayinmore, that the impression she was making was far from agreeable. He made, first, a nondescript sort of a noise, between a short cough and a long groan; his chin sunk within the loose folds of his ample neckcloth, and his broad chest swelled against the closely-buttoned breast of his well-padded

coat. Suddenly checking herself, she therefore added, in a more playful tone, "But, as Beatrice says, *I pray your Grace, pardon me, I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.*"

"No matter, indeed, Ma'am," said Lord Stayinmore, with a forced effort to maintain his courtesy—"I can sincerely affirm that it is no matter. Could any one oblige me with the evening paper?" he added, anxious to escape.

"Here it is," said she, handing it over to him with equal *empressement;* then turning to Mr. Spencer, "'A nemico che fugge fa un ponte d'oro,' as the prudent Italians say; and in default of gold, I pay in paper currency."

"How little they can have to fill the papers with," said his Lordship, "when they are reduced to such extracts from the country journals as this. 'Lord Castleton has been some time expected at his seat, Somersby Park, in this neighbourhood, but has not yet arrived.

Report says, that being in a delicate state of health, he still lingers amongst the sea-breezes at Brighton, but none of the late notices from that fashionable watering-place mention his Lordship as amongst its distinguished visitants.' Who cares?"

"Indeed, I never knew any body care at all about Lord Castleton's movements; he is one of those persons in whose case universal popularity is synonymous with general indifference," drawled out Mrs. MacAngle, who had, in former days, made as much of an effort as was consistent with her listless nature to detach him from his allegiance to Lady Madelina Manfred.

"Castleton will never make any figure in public life. He cannot keep his object in view with the proper uniformity of purpose," ejaculated Lord Stayinmore. "He has no steady political consistency," still harping on the threatened dangers of Bankcumwall, Singlecot, and Summertemple."

"For my part, I reckon him an intolerable *bore*," said Mr. Spencer, to whom he never addressed half-a-dozen words in his life; "and it 's quite a mistake to *ca–al* him ha–andsome: a fair man a-always wants expression," added he, casting, as he rose from the table, an approving glance at his own enormous black head, which, being stuck upon the shortest of persons, was only just seen trunkless in the mirror above the sideboard.

"You have, some of you," said Lady Gayland, "hit upon the greatest of all possible faults under which he at present labours, if not in all your eyes, on all your tongues; he is the absent one. How lucky it is that all the sins which absence from such a society as this comprehends, all its atrocities, imperfections, ridicules, (that is not in this case so much an anti-climax as you think,) can never be perpetuated on one devoted head; that we are all

in turn subject to its influence, and that, if *la moitié du monde prend plaisir à médire, et l'autre moitié à croire les médisances*, in our turn *we* must all be comprised in one or other of these two divisions."

"Dear Lady Gayland, what a tirade!" said Mrs. MacAngle; "I was not aware, when I ventured to assert that nobody cared about Lord Castleton, that you were prepared to give me so immediate and convincing a contradiction of my assertion."

How many distant and scattered images will the reference but of a moment collect, when the heart points the index of the memory. Even whilst Mrs. MacAngle was drawling forth her half-hinted insinuation, there passed over in the mirror of Lady Gayland's mind the reflection of many a brilliant fête, and many a meeting in sculptured hall, and the softer shade of many a social promenade, beneath the soothing in-

fluence of an Italian summer. But whatever she felt, she hesitated not to reply, "You are now quite mistaken!" blushing slightly, perhaps, at her generous warmth being so misinterpreted, and speaking, consequently, in a more hurried manner. "You are now quite mistaken! my observations were merely general. It is true, I did know Lord Castleton well in Italy; but our exotic acquaintance, which the warm south had ripened into intimacy, has not borne transplanting into this northern clime, and I have seen but little of him since my return. Certainly, I will acknowledge that my recollection of him does not confirm the opinions of this meeting, that he is all these,—ill-looking—dull—weak, and uninteresting, but *n'importe.* Do I think the worse of him for all this? or, in point of fact, do any of you? And which of you would not say as much of his present neighbour, if afflict-

ed with that first of faults, absence? The only cure would be, if B. instead of C. could some day hear what A. meant C. should hear of B. how much less agreeable a companion that first of wits A. would be thought by his butt B. I have often longed that there could be cross-hearings as well as cross-readings; but the misfortune is, that though libellous letters might be mis-sent, mis-directed, a social sarcasm never miscarries, but goes straight to its mark."

"But really, for you of all people," said Mrs. MacAngle, "to complain of one's occasionally saying a severe thing!"

"I am as aware as any one can be, how much too freely I often speak my mind to those that are present, for which, of those *here* whom I have thus offended, I humbly sue for pardon," clasping her hands together, and looking at Lord Stayinmore with an expression of contrition, which, though slightly bur-

lesqued, it was impossible to resent, and difficult to resist. "But, *en revanche*, I never do speak ill of the absent; perhaps, for no better reason than that my soul pants for nobler game. Had my friend Peter the Great there," pointing to Mr. Spencer, who was seen equipped for sport starting from the front-door; "had he, like his northern namesake, ever known other fields than those of stubble, and popped at what could pop at him again, he would not be so keen after the partridges."

Above a quarter of an hour had elapsed after this conversation, and the last lingering sipper of tea and crumbler of roll had brought to conclusion his most carefully elongated meal, when at length Sir North made his appearance, and, with a jerking bow, to be divided amongst all present, began, in that sort of disjointed colloquy and string of clipped sentences for which, it was before mentioned, he

was famous:—"I beg a thousand pardons—quite shocked; but the fact is—a most unpleasant occurrence that—Lady Gayland, I need not ask how your Ladyship has rested—evident—Aurora—rather Hebe;—but as breakfast's over—somewhat late for that simile—Jupiter's jug, and all that—I am never late, only the fact is, this morning—a most unpleasant occurrence that—Lord Stayinmore, it has prevented my reading the papers,—only looked at the Gazette—Delighted to see the judicious use your Lordship has made of the vacancy caused by the death of our late excellent friend. You could not have chosen better; no steadier voter than Montague Mumchance;—won't speak often,—so much the better. Talk of rising young men, indeed; we don't care for their rising, so long as they are good sitters. Apropos to rising, though you will not think that that is my forte—but the fact is, a most

unpleasant occurrence, involving a little legal business—only just come down, not got into Burn yet—as fresh at it as my friend Peter Spencer. By the bye, where is he?—just the game for him to smell out—like a young pointer—break him in—"

"But Peter Spencer is just now smelling out game by the means of his proxy pointer," said his friend Mr. Middleman, "and he's applying his own nose to the stock of his gun in a turnip field."

"Peter the Great," added Lady Gayland, "is probably, like his imperial namesake, by this time, if not *overthrown*, fairly *beat* by the *Swedes*. But, my dear Sir North, now you have sufficiently informed us both that the fact is an unpleasant occurrence, and that the unpleasant occurrence is a fact, do let us judge of their reciprocal qualities ourselves, and tell us what has happened?"

Sir North then informed his hearers, as clearly as the confused and contradictory notions he had as yet imbibed on the subject enabled him, of some of the occurrences of the preceding night; how a daring gang of smugglers had been captured by a revenue cutter, after having landed and concealed somewhere a valuable cargo, and how it was found on this occasion a barbarous murder had been added to their former misdeeds. All the information they had as yet collected was vague, and amounted merely to inference. It was principally derived from the captain of the revenue cutter, whom even Sir North had had penetration enough to discover to be a shrewd and sensible man; though this opinion, which he had correctly formed, he did not himself confirm to his present hearers in its full extent, by the more confused and interpolated version which he gave of the information he had thus obtained.

No one of the smugglers had as yet seemed the least inclined to turn King's evidence; no corpse had been found on board the vessel; but the open boat or coble belonging to the lugger had several stains of blood at the bottom, and on its gunnel the stamp of a bloody hand was distinctly traced, the ends of the finger marks being inside, and as if they had been strongly pressed against the inward ledge, seeming to indicate that a person mortally hurt had been thrown overboard, and had struggled for life to the last by clinging to the side of the boat.

The part which was quite unintelligible to them to whom Sir North endeavoured to explain it, and which had rather puzzled the captain of the cutter himself, was how to connect these appearances with the exclamations, when first found, of the girl, who had been discovered on the beach; and who appeared to have some connection with, or at

least, previous knowledge of the transactions of the gang, as involved in the last night's adventure. Her first wild inquiry had been, "Where is the body?" which would lead one to conclude, that the act of violence had been committed ashore, and under her observation; and yet the appearances in the boat would seem to indicate that the mortal struggle had been after they had put out to sea.

"As it is," said Sir North, "it is impossible, at present, to extract any coherent account from her; she is either decidedly *non compos*, or, though far be it from me to suspect any thing harsh of one so young, who ought not yet to be hardened, and who, I am bound to add, is of rather an interesting appearance; yet I fear all this unwillingness to give any account arises from wilful stubbornness."

"Poor wretch! stubbornness!" exclaimed

Lady Gayland, compassionately; "is there no more charitable way to account for such unwillingness? She would not, probably, young as you describe her, have been even casually involved in such a transaction, unless under circumstances which would lead one to believe her at this moment labouring under the overwhelming affliction of either the untimely loss, or impending shame, of some one she loves. Where is she?"

"Why, I saw I could make nothing of her at present," answered Sir North, "so I turned her over to Jones, telling her to keep her apart from her companions, and lock her up a bit by herself, in a darkish, lonely room, where, I'll warrant, reflection will bring her about, and she will understand her duty, and learn how to make her peace with the offended majesty of injured justice."

Sir North attempted to look grand, under

the consciousness that he was himself to personify his own peroration. Lady Gayland made no reply, but shortly after left the room.

Sir North, with all his vanity, did not feel himself quite up to understanding, much less expounding and administering, the most complicated section of the most intricate portion of our penal code, which comprises the revenue laws; with which, in this instance, there was but too much reason to fear an accusation of murder would be involved. He therefore postponed the examination till late in the day, when he hoped for the arrival of an able solicitor from Mayton; one whose well-tried merits had prevented our poor friend Pounce, in his probationary lifetime, from dividing any business with him: and this Mr. Asklaw, Sir North meant on this occasion should act as his clerk: his butler, who usually

doubled that part, being, in point of fact, not up to much more besides executing warrants himself to take up the oldest offenders from the cellar, and making out "permits" to transfer poachers to the House of Correction.

By thus postponing the examination, Sir North calculated that, even should Mr. Asklaw not come upon his summons, Peter Spencer would then be returned with his bagfull, not of briefs, but of birds, and ready to act as his

CHAPTER IV.

Yet time serves wherein you may redeem
Your banished honours, and restore yourselves
Into the good thoughts of the world again.

SHAKSPEARE.

"I CAN assure your Ladyship, it's quite the most *unsuitablest* place you ever *seed* for your Ladyship," said Mrs. Jones, in answer to Lady Gayland's entreaty to be shown the room to which the poor girl had been conveyed. "It's quite a place for a lady like you to catch the *cholera*, or the *tic-doolceroose*, or some other narvous disorder."

"Why! should all these dreadful things happen to me for staying in it for a few minutes, at my own will and pleasure, and yet it be a proper place in which forcibly to confine that poor creature? What is it? not a real dungeon, I hope?"

"Oh! no, my Lady, I trust I am not such an *unchristen hankeret*, as to deal in such things. You see, Ma'am, the fact is, she's stowed in my lumber-room. It's many a year now, whenever Sir North said to me, 'Jones, take this here out of my way, and put it by'—up it's always gone, under lock and key, into the lumber-room. So, when he said to-day, 'You, Jones, put by this young woman, and keep her safe till I want her;' it come most *natral* like to me, just to pop her in there, and there she is."

There was much in Mrs. Jones's manner which would have been to Lady Gayland, at

any other time, irresistible food for ridicule; but the errand on which she was then going, had so much excited her interest, that she was regulated, in her answers to Mrs. Jones, by an anxious desire to smooth as much as possible the precise objections that were started by that methodical body to the object she had in view. No one of which objections were founded at all upon any difficulty in counteracting Sir North's orders, which had been that the young person should be kept alone; for, though Mrs. Jones had known Sir North all his life-time, and, consequently, much of her own, she had not therefore imbibed a more respectful deference for his authority, than those more recently added members of his establishment, which had been gradually swelled to the present extent. Mrs. Jones had begun life as servant-maid to old Sir Simon, at his office in the City. And therefore let it not be supposed that she

is given as a common specimen of the house-keeping species as it now exists. It would be strange indeed, if, in these days, when education has been so widely diffused amongst the middling and lower orders, a pet preserve of slipslop and ignorance should be found, exactly amongst those who have the most means of improving themselves by comparing their own phraseology with that of their superiors. Mrs. Jones had, in spite of the accumulated dignity of her multiplied charges, retained much of the original "Maid of All Work of Cripplegate." In the course of the many years when she had been left in the solitary keeping of Hornscliff Abbey, her original cockney had become a little chequered with the country dialect in the neighbourhood: and from her occasional association with the fine gentlemen's fine gentlemen, and the *elegantes*, *helegant women*, which Sir North had occa-

sionally, at considerable intervals, collected there, she had acquired nothing but awkward affectation.

But I forget that all this while I am keeping Lady Gayland on the staircase of the turret even longer than Mrs. Jones would, who, at length, said—

"But, *o' coorse*, my Lady, I'm not going for to say you shan't not do nothing you chooses." And with this she began to mount the spiral staircase of the turret, jingling at the same time the big bunch of keys, from which she was feeling out the biggest, as belonging to the ponderous lock of the lumber-room. Whilst fitting it in its allotted key-hole, she turned to Lady Gayland, saying, "I'm afraid your Ladyship will find it a small matter *dampishish*, it's so nigh the roof. I could light a bit of fire now, but it do smoke a triflish at first lighting: as I remember well this time five years back,

when Sir North set me to burn some old papers here; and if I 'd known you 'd been so *descending* as to come up here, I'd have lighted it when I first put her in here; but the reason was I was a bit *timbersome* of her, poor despairing *cretur!* that she might be *misheevous* with fire, since we 've heard tell of the burnings of the *insensiblaries*, and some of them *papish monkeish* old chairs would catch like tinder."

Her follower, as may be imagined, declined the offer to smother her with smoke, though, at first entrance, the room struck damp, and yet close, as never having been aired. The low gallery, let into the roof and sparingly lighted, was, nevertheless, spacious, as far as its dimensions could be guessed at through the immense heaps of littered rubbish with which it was crowded, and which afforded ample proofs that if Mrs. Jones, who kept the key, rarely visited it, she could never have done so empty-handed.

Against the low groined windows were leaned so as almost to exclude the light, broken detached wings of a japan screen, and over them were hung the sails of a pleasure-boat. On the seats of some fractured high-backed cedar chairs, which had belonged to the monks, were piled all the numbers of the *Gentleman's Magazine* from the beginning; a crayon drawing of George Anne Bellamy; a print of Admiral Duncan; Mrs. Abington, as *Scrub;* Sir Simon's hatchment; and some coloured lamps for an illumination. On an old billiard-table were heaped, a gouty chair, fishing-tackle, packets of Sir Simon's treasury vouchers scattered loose about, and specimens of rare plants sent as presents and never unpacked, with every other possible variety of chaotic confusion, much too numerous to describe.

But Lady Gayland hardly observed all this, for her attention was engrossed by an object

which seemed as motionless as any of the incongruous fixtures by which it was surrounded. Lucy Darnell was discovered sitting on a low stool, leaning one elbow on a tattered sofa beside her, and the other on her knee, whilst she covered her face with her hands, pressing the palms against her eyes, and clenching between her fingers, the locks of her long fair hair, which was twined and twisted through them. Her intended comforter, Lady Gayland, moved slowly and softly towards her, and was about to place herself silently on the sofa beside her, on which Lucy was leaning, when Mrs. Jones stopped her with something of a scream :

" Oh, my Lady ! take care ! it 's dust an inch thick, quite a shame to be seen ! nothing as comes here ever feels a duster *agin* ; and *that ere sofar* has been here long afore my day ; they do say it was put by ever since the last Lord Hornscliff was laid on it, when he made

away with himself, after he had made away with every thing else; and to think of your brushing down the nasty dust as *has bin* there ever since, with that sweet gown. Vapor, (vapeur) too, as Mrs. Angel-leck calls it, is the most wulnerablest colour as is!"

Lady Gayland could have been impatient at this interference, but she preferred quickly, but effectually getting rid of Mrs. Jones altogether, to any mode of controlling her proceedings. And as this wish was not effected by words, it need not be recorded in them; it is therefore sufficient to say, that the manner which she adopted for conveying her desire to Mrs. Jones was satisfactory to both parties.

When at length left alone with poor Lucy Darnell, her visitor felt, from the graceful, though desolate, attitude of the young person before her, an interest in her, for which she had not been previously prepared; and

though she had come there with an anxious desire to minister comfort to her sufferings, she knew not exactly in what way to commence her self-imposed task. She bent silently over the apparently unconscious sufferer, desirous, if possible, that her presence should appear to be in some way acknowledged by her to whom she came, before she abruptly intruded herself on her notice. She stood intently gazing on her whose face was still concealed. On her own fine countenance, the workings of that benevolence which had brought her there, were blended with that softened expression of true feminine delicacy, which now made her pause and shrink from the fear of incautiously wounding where she meant to soothe. It would have been next to impossible to identify in her, who was even then fastidiously restrained by the mere chance of inadvertent offence or injury to a helpless girl, whom she came to serve—the

same person who, an hour before, had fearlessly scattered the shafts of her ridicule amongst the great and powerful — those who were easiest to offend and slowest to forgive. The classical contour of the finely-chiselled features was indeed the same, and was such as Domenichino would have selected for its beauty—such as, loving to paint, he would have dressed in one or other of those varied expressions, according as his subject had been, a Sibyl or a saint.

Seeing that the motionless being over whom she leaned, and whom she had gradually approached, still gave no sign of awakened consciousness, she softly touched the cold and clammy hand, still so strongly pressed by Lucy against her brow and forehead, and attempted gently to draw it off, and take it between her's, and addressed to her at the same time these words:

" However great your grief may be, my

poor child, there may be some part of your sorrow which it may be in the power of another to alleviate; and if so, I think you would prefer to open your heart to one of your own sex, though unknown to you, rather than to any of those rude and lawless men in whose company you were brought here, but to whose society, I feel assured when I look at you, you must be entirely a stranger."

There was that harmony in the silvery tone of Lady Gayland's voice—there was that sympathy in her soft and persuasive touch, which, though Lucy's faculties were as yet too scattered to enable her rightly to comprehend the purport of what was said, yet prevented her from abruptly rejecting the proffered interference.

"Thank you most kindly, Ma'am," said she, gently returning the soft pressure of the lady's hand with that which she now allowed her to

detach from her cheek, but dropping her head at the same time still lower towards her knees, and shading her features with the other hand, whilst she spoke—" thank you most kindly; But yesterday I should not have known what to wish for, what favour to ask of any one, stranger or not; and to-day, though I am obliged to you all every bit the same, not all your kindness could lend me one ray of comfort."

" Why so?" replied her visitor. " It is evident that you are at present labouring under some severe affliction; but there is no situation from which every ray of comfort or of hope is excluded, except guilt, and even there, only from hardened and habitual guilt: that, I feel assured, is not your case; nay, you tell me yourself that but yesterday all was peace and content around; think, then, how much of your present distress may have arisen, not so

much from the extent of the actual calamity which oppresses you, as from the sudden abruptness of the change by which it was effected. Nay, perhaps you may have been imprudent,—you have, contrary to the consent of your friends, wandered where these suspicious associates have unexpectedly involved you in their lawless transactions,—you dread the exposure, to those whom you respect, which this discovery entails? If so, confide openly to me; my protection might, when mere imprudence, not guilt, is its cause, smooth your return there, whence you ought never to have wandered. Shame ought never to be allowed to weigh down so young and gentle a head; and since yesterday it cannot be your casual connection with the smuggling transactions of last night which have so completely changed your situation as would induce your friends to cast you off.'

"Oh, no, God bless them! no one will cast

me off; my dear father could never dart an angry look or give a hard word to his poor Lucy, if all the judges of the land had found me guilty! But 'tisn't for that I grieve: I do not fear for myself; there will be no judge to find me guilty;—they'll lay the blame elsewhere, and he will suffer for it, and it is by him that the name which I bear, and shame, will be said to have been coupled together, and his stout heart and daring spirit will only serve to bear the passive trial of a disgraceful death. But all the time I shall feel that I was the guilty one; yes, I killed him as much as if I gave the blow. He's gone, he's dead, the best, the kindest, the gentlest, and I'm sure, whatever he was, one of the noblest of men."

It was in vain that Lady Gayland gave the best attention of which her acute faculties were capable, to these disjointed and self-accusing

reflections, on the events of the last four-and-twenty hours; it was in vain that she attempted to connect in her mind any distinct idea of what actually had happened, or of who the various parties were to whom allusion had been made, or what connexion they had with the person before her: but gathering that her grief was principally connected with the murder supposed to have been committed, and having heard from Sir North that the occurrence was not at all as yet substantiated by evidence, she endeavoured to console the mourner by throwing some doubts upon the fact, saying, "Give not way at once, my poor girl, to such bitter repinings; you could not feel more acutely if his death were already ascertained and pronounced. I understand that there are yet hopes that the wounded man may recover."

"Ah! where is he?" screamed Lucy, starting up; "have they then found him? Quick,

dearest Lady, take me to him ; let me care him, watch him, preserve his precious life. But no, no, no !" added she, sinking down again, upon reading in Lady Gayland's expressive countenance that she saw she had gone too far in attempting to excite hopes which she could not support, " no, I see you are only humouring me like a child. He cannot, he never will be found. Why was he not found in the boat with the others, when they refused to let him stay with me ? Where should he be then ? 'tis the roar of the waves can alone answer that question. It was no wild vision when from the beach I thought I saw them fling him overboard. He struggled hard, and one he dragged down with him, and, as I thought, the contending breakers bore both aloft for a moment before my sight, and then, swallowing them as they sank, rose in another hideous form without them, and closed for ever over

their heads. Was all this so, or not?—who can tell? who can tell? I'm sure Lucy cannot."

Knitting her brows, she seemed for a short time endeavouring to collect and analyze her thoughts on the subject; then, as if finding the effort in vain, she covered her face again with her hands, and sobbed hysterically.

Lady Gayland's strong mind enabled her, when she thought it necessary, to command her feelings, and through all the early part of this scene she had made extraordinary efforts to do so, knowing that if she could be at all useful when she wished so to be, it must only be by calming the sufferer, not increasing her excitation by sharing her emotions. But the wild and plaintive manner in which Lucy asked herself the question as to the reality of the dreadful scene she fancied, struck upon one of those simple chords which pure nature has implanted

in every gentle breast, which, when touched, vibrate irresistible sympathy; and she was by this for a time so completely upset as to be unable to attempt to resume her task of comforter.

CHAPTER V.

I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong.

SHAKSPEARE.

My watch, Sir, has indeed comprehended two auspicious persons.

IBID.

WHILST Lady Gayland struggled to recover her own composure, she felt how important it was to prepare Lucy's mind for the ordeal which she had so soon to go through in the shape of a legal investigation into all these transactions, and previous to which it was so important that her tranquillity should in some

measure be restored. She knew the unfair inferences which might by possibility be drawn from her present disordered state; how often, in the hard judgment of technical men, the effects of modest embarrassment and awe-struck inexperience may be perverted into the confusion and contradictions of guilt; and in this case the probability of such a misconstruction was increased by the overwhelming nature of the recent sorrows which oppressed her. Yet all the assistance which she could give her to support her through so severe a trial, Lady Gayland felt, must be in previous advice, for to it she must go alone and unaccompanied. However much the interest she now felt in her new *protégée* might make her wish to accompany her, she was aware that her presence, as a female guest of Sir North's, at a legal investigation in his private room, into a deed of blood and violence, would be rather misplaced. She

therefore attempted to sustain the impression of the last idea, which seemed to have so powerful an effect on Lucy's feelings, and to enforce upon her a due sense of the unpleasant duty to which she was shortly to be summoned, and from which she could not shrink, saying, "If that dreadful scene to which you have alluded with such natural sensations of horror, is actually impressed upon your mind as a fact, you should endeavour to recollect that you are now in the power, and shortly will be summoned into the presence of those who have a right to ask all you know on the subject. You would, of course, be most careful not to make a matter of grave accusation against any one that which may have been merely the workings of your own distempered imagination; but if you can really feel assured that you actually saw that which you described, however painful it may be to the retiring gentleness of your cha-

racter to bear witness against any one, you have now no choice; you owe it not only to the memory of him you mourn, but also your duty to that superior power who has ordained that through you justice should in this instance be done on guilt, commands you to speak, without fear or shrinking, the plain and simple truth."

"What! and myself twine the rope round his neck. Ugh! no, no!" muttered Lucy, shuddering: "my first, best, my only friend, whose only fault was loving me too well; who has thought of his Lucy far, far off, when, what was night to him, was day to me. No; if they have tortures here, let them use them, rather than I will utter one word against poor George."

Lady Gayland felt now completely perplexed: she thought she knew the language of passion; she thought she could not be completely de-

ceived in her estimate of artless innocence; and yet it was difficult to reconcile such contradictory expressions of strong affection, as it seemed, at the same time, for the slayer and the slain; him who had fallen a victim to lawless violence, and the perpetrator of the deed. The fact was, that Lucy's affectionate disposition unconsciously impelled her to vent her feelings in exaggerated terms, when speaking of either of them; principally from the self-reproaches with regard to both, which she mixed up with the horrors of the last four-and-twenty hours. She could not bear to reflect that the last words on Churchill's lips, before his untimely end, were unrequited professions of love for her, which love had, indeed, been the cause of his death: as little could she bear to recollect that it was to her alleged fickleness, though there never had been any positive pledges to confirm such an accusation,

that George had attributed all his progressive errors, and but too plainly traced his last dreadful act of guilt.

Lady Gayland's object in seeking Lucy Darnell in her present temporary confinement, had been, if possible, to soothe the sorrows of an unfortunate female. But it was no part of her intention to gratify her own curiosity through the medium of that involuntary half-confidence which those sorrows themselves might be the means of eliciting. The sort of mystery which to her seemed to hang over Lucy's connexion, both with the murdered man and him who was in custody, induced her to avoid, rather than to press, any farther questions on that part of the subject; and she was confining her counsel to general advice, not to get herself into farther difficulties by an apparent attempt to thwart the ends of justice, when Mrs. Jones re-entered the room to inform her that the

Lawyer from Mayton was arrived, and Mr. Spencer was taking off his shooting-gaiters, and Sir North was almost ready for what Mrs. Jones called his *justiciary* business.

Lady Gayland rose to leave her *protegée* with an anxious feeling as to the conduct she would pursue during her approaching trial: in spite of the doubt she was left in as to her connexion with some of the parties concerned in these transactions, the course of the interview with her had excited in her monitress's breast a powerful interest in her behalf.

It was impossible not to be prepossessed in her favour by her personal appearance; though the obscurity of the darkened room in which they were, had prevented Lady Gayland from seeing her thoroughly. It is not merely on its victim man, that beauty in woman, when apart from rivalry, produces an irresistibly forcible effect. Lady Gayland, with all her

occasional off-hand manner of speaking, and with the frequent temptations opened to an ever-ready fancy of ridiculing personal defects, could never be accused of having made an ill-natured remark upon a rival beauty; and, certainly, she could very well spare any occasional advantage which such use of her satirical powers might have been sufficient to promise. But here, not only the immeasurable distinction of their different rank in life, but the present position of one of the parties, would have prevented the idea of possible rivalry: and certainly, whatever may be thought the best light for commanding admiration; for exciting sympathy, there is nothing like beauty in distress.

Lucy was, on her side, so much touched by the unexpected interest shown in her fate by so superior a being as Lady Gayland, that, before parting with her, she promised

faithfully, that in the examination to which she was about to be subjected, she would endeavour to be composed; and that at any rate she would be perfectly candid, on every part which related to herself, who she was and whence she came; and that as far as she could, without injuring those she wished to save, she would explain the whole transaction.

Lady Gayland, however, could not satisfy herself perfectly with this conditional promise. She felt a great inclination still, if possible, to be present at the examination; and in passing through the entrance-hall, in her way down, she found Sir North and Mr. Spencer in close conference; the former with a light, calfskin-covered, legal-looking, quarto volume under his arm; the other drawing the *charge*, not of the prisoners, but of his gun. The case had, however, been opened to him, as he was saying,

"Oh, certainly, Sir North; it will be the su-mmit of e*a*-rthly *fe-li-ci*-ty to me, to render myself, in the most *di-mi*-nutive degree, your s*e*rvic*ea*ble sl*a*-ve. It is, as you justly assumed, one of the most *co*-mpli-*ca*-ted departm*e*-nts of your judicial functions. The advice of a pr*o*-fessional man is not only expedient, but I may say indisp-*e*-nsable to a rural Archimedes. I sŭppose we must attack them under the 9th of George II. Chap. 35. for running unlawful goods. Apropos, Sir North—that black bitch, Juno, has taken to running hares; we had better put her into the indictm*e*nt; 'p*o*-n my soul we had—ha! ha! If, according to the 9th of George II. this ch*a*-rge could be extr*a*-*a*cted, I mean substantiated, it would be the most *e*-*li*-gible mode of p*r*oc*ee*ding; if not, we must pr-*o*-c*ee*d against them under the 5th of George III. Chapter 13. In the mean time, I will just

change these," sticking out conceitedly a worsted-clad fragment of a column, which was called a leg, and which it would have been well for him if he could have changed.

In all this he had shown as usual, that, with the greatest pretensions to accurate information, and professions of the desire to serve, his knowledge was never useful, and his assistance always contingent upon his own convenience.

Lady Gayland joined Sir North, as Mr. Spencer left him. "My dear Sir North, I am very anxious to interest you in favour of that young girl, who is about to be examined before you; I am sure that her connexion with these lawless parties is accidental and recent; but I foresee that she will be terribly alarmed at the whole proceeding. Now, what I want of you is no hard task,—it is only to recollect as *much* as possible, that *she* is a very pretty young

girl, and as *little* as possible, that you are the 'great Justice Midas.' I beg pardon," she said, seeing that that last allusion was unfortunate; "all I meant was, that I hoped you would be the good-natured, indulgent person, you are to *all* of our sex, and not endue any additional dignity on this occasion. Now just promise me that," she said, in her most coaxing manner.

Sir North, who, in the fascination of her address, forgot Justice Midas, answered,

"My dear Lady Gayland, I have not now to inform you, that to me your *will* alone is law; only recollect, it must not only be law to me, but must appear so to the professional gentlemen I have called in, or else—"

"Nay, Sir North, take care, or I shall come myself, and see whether you administer accurately what you own you consider as your only law, my sovereign will and pleasure."

Sir North would generally have thought himself only too much flattered at Lady Gayland making him her *butt*, in any manner which at the moment might hit her fancy, or chime in with her merry humour; but just at present, principally from its novelty, his magisterial dignity was his hobby, on which account her threatened presence, bringing with it the imminent danger of ridicule, was particularly unpleasant to him; and he, therefore, bowed himself away, with as much of a negative as he dared to put upon any proposal of her's, vented in disjointed, half-sentences, "Fear—perfectly impossible—distract attention—syren voice—imperative duty—strictly private—magisterial functions—lives at stake—"

Lady Gayland, looking after him, only muttered, "Full of wise saws, and modern instances, and so he plays his part;" for she evidently saw that it would be impossible

under these circumstances, with any delicacy, to press her desire to attend, and therefore, gave it up, and retired to her own room, to wait the result.

CHAPTER VI.

I am Robert Shallow, Sir, a poor Esquire of this county, and one of the King's Justices of the Peace.

SHAKSPEARE.

There is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemned
He deals on his own soul. BYRON.

SIR NORTH having taken his seat on what is figuratively called the "bench," typified in this instance by a most portentous looking elbow chair, meant not only passively to confer dignity upon him who sat in it, but calculated actively to strike awe into all who approached it, the prisoners were summoned into his presence. The judicial consequence of Sir North's *ci-devant* study had been recently

perfected by "appropriate scenery and decorations" in the shape of frame-work divisions, borrowed exactly from the "London boards" or Metropolitan police-offices. In short, there was only one ingredient wanting to make it an excellent "justice-shop," and that was a little stock of law on the part of the purveyor of that commodity.

Sir North being stationed in what the servants called his throne, with Mr. Asklaw on one side, and Mr. Spencer on the other, with Captain Scudd, of the cutter, at a little distance, the prisoners were brought in. They were many in number, and of varied appearance, from the hard weather-beaten *tar*, who feared nothing, to the fresh lubberly youth, who was scared with the apparent certainty of an hempen cord. There was, among them, both the uneasy assumption of pretended recklessness, and the downcast gaze of nerveless despair.

The whole set had on this occasion, too, an unusually care-worn and disordered appearance, as much from the active labours and hard-fought dangers of the preceding night, as from the awkwardness of their present position. Captain Collett alone, neither in his outward appearance, nor, as it seemed, in his internal sensations, was at all changed by the events that had taken place, but still wore the same unvaried expression of quiet cunning.

Poor George Darnell, on the other hand, could not have been recognised for the same light-hearted, frank-spoken, somewhat overbearing roisterer who had appeared at his uncle's hospitable board so few days before. The remorseful feelings of which he had been the prey during the last few hours, appeared almost to have eaten into his very features, so deeply was their impression stamped upon his wild and haggard countenance.

Sir North, whose great anxiety was not to show how little he really knew of the duties which he had undertaken to discharge, soon found the greatest difference in the value of his two coadjutors,—of the professional assistant whom he had casually sought from Mayton, and of the private friend, on whose considerate suggestions he had mainly depended for helping him, without expense, out of a difficulty. The latter (Mr. Spencer) appeared only anxious to confound all his hearers with the extent of his own information, in which confusion his friend was most especially included. Mr. Asklaw's desire, on the other hand, was to transfuse his own knowledge almost imperceptibly for the use of his principal. Mr. Spencer began a tirade, much too long and tedious to be recorded here; the result of which was, that poor Sir North's head, in the conclusion, only retained a chaotic mass of contradictory acts of

parliament which he had quoted, principally from the 8th of George II. c. 18, to the 52d George III. c. 143, these both inclusive; much about "foreign brandy, arrack rum, or strong waters;" something about the eye or the limb of a custom-house officer being assessed of the value of 50*l.* extra; but most of all, for Mr. Spencer principally relied upon the act against vessels for hovering near the coast, Sir North had to hear of the peculiar construction of "cutters, luggers, shallops, wherries, smacks, and yawls:" this, more than any thing else, bewildered him; for though he would not for the world have acknowledged his ignorance, but, on the contrary, looked at least as wise as usual on the subject, yet there was not one of these, whether cutter, lugger, shallop, wherry, smack, or yawl, which, if he had seen, he could have known from Noah's ark. In the mean time, Mr. Asklaw had quietly in-

sinuated a Burn's Justice open at the right place before him; and though, his head still being a little confused with Peter Spencer's prolific jargon, his eye did at first wander to the wrong page of the two, and his attention yet stranded amongst the islands of Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, Sark, and Man; yet, at length, he was beginning to fancy he saw his way clearer, when Spencer having, as he thought, satisfactorily played the part of counsel, rose to try his hand as a judge, and make some sort of address to the prisoners; and he was particularly diffuse upon the enormity of the conduct of the leader of such a gang as this, (the captain of the smugglers,) who, in attempting to defraud his country, had evidently deluded his followers, many of whom were young offenders. Whilst Spencer was working himself into eloquence, he was interrupted by Captain Collett.

"I'll tell you what, young gentleman, I take it you've only your own authority for putting yourself into the commission here; if so, you'd better keep your advice for those who ask it, and your opinions for those who need them. It is no part of my present misfortunes that I should be forced to hear you preach; I know exactly how much I'm forced to bear, and no more. I must answer his worship's questions there, always provided that I need not criminate myself, which I'm not very likely to do; and I must 'mind his worship's bidding always, providing it's according to law, which, of course, it's likely to be, but of which same law, it's as well to let all present know, I've myself some little smattering. But it's neither my business, nor my pleasure, to stand here as a mark for you to shoot your tongue at, as practice in jaw, or law, whichever you please to call it."

"Silence, fellow, respect the court!" said Sir North, in, as he thought, the most impressive manner.

Whilst this collateral dispute was going on, Mr. Asklaw, who had not previously had any communication with the Captain of the revenue cutter, had extracted from him the degree of circumstantial evidence he had been able to collect, and which had, since they arrived at Hornscliff, been, to a certain extent, confirmed by the general report, that a stranger, who had been for some days residing in that neighbourhood, was mysteriously missing. He again repeated the appearances they had remarked in the smuggler's open boat, intimating that a deed of violence had been there consummated. The girl's exclamation, when found on the beach, seeming to prove that the assault which had been the cause of death, (whether by fire-arms, or what other means, did not yet ap-

pear,) had taken place on shore previous to the re-embarkation; it immediately occurred to Mr. Asklaw, that this being much the more serious charge of the two, it would be most desirable to go into this first; because, could a case of murder be substantiated and brought home to the parties, the other accusation, though a much more complicated affair, was of infinitely minor importance.

He therefore suggested that the young girl, who was in attendance, should be called in and examined as to her knowledge of the earlier part of these transactions, to which her exclamation on the beach had referred. This proposal was acceded to by Sir North, and poor Lucy sent for. In the interval which followed, had all present, of every degree, not been too much occupied with their own concerns to remark George, the workings of his countenance, in his efforts to maintain his composure

during these moments of, to him, agonizing suspense, would then have been construed as the struggles of a guilty conscience.

After some little while the door opened, and Mrs. Jones only made her appearance. "I ask pardon, Sir North, for *protruding* myself, but it's quite impossible that young person can make her *testament*, for she 's *parfectly historical.*"

It was urged by Mr. Spencer that she ought at least to be brought there, that they might themselves judge of the state in which she was; when George, with apparent effort, stepped forward to prevent it. "It 's not the least necessary, gentlemen, if you 'll only give me leave to speak a moment. She could only hang me if she came here, and I 'd rather do that job for myself than owe it to her handy-work. If I must know that my guilt is in her thoughts, let me in mercy think that she could not bring

her lips to utter it. If you 'll only hear me, I'll tell you all. Nay, never fear," said he to his companions, observing rather a murmur of alarm, "I 'm not going to peach about any of you; leave me *alone* to tell what concerns myself *alone.* I know you all too well to think you 'd make any difficulties about my twisting my own hempen cord—I know very well what you, too, are going to say, gentlemen," added he, turning to the bench, and persevering through an attempt to interrupt him from thence, "you would advise me not to criminate myself; but when a man has brought disgrace on an honest name, repaid the kindness of his kin with deceit, and behaved like a bloodthirsty savage in the presence of her he loved, why, the sooner he finishes his own business the better, and the less he mixes up with his shameful end those dear ones for whom it would have been better that they had

never seen him.—I 'll out with it at once, without more words," continued he in a firmer tone, and, after gulping down that emotion which swelled within his throat, "'Twas I that killed Churchill; it was all my own affair; these comrades had nought to do with it. I might not be minded, perhaps, to kill him outright, but I certainly did hate him with all my heart, and I fear my spirit yearned for his blood."

"One moment," said Mr. Asklaw; "(with your leave, Sir North,) I must remind you that you can be doing yourself no good by speaking in that tone: by making those declarations of furious hatred, you are giving your unhappy act the character of deliberate murder."

"God forgive me then!" said George; "I would not willingly make myself out worse than I really am; not for my own sake, for my

sand is run, but for theirs who must share my shame, and to whom there will soon nought be left behind that was mine but my bad name, which will stick to them long after they've tried hard to forget George Darnell. I did not mean to say that I carried deadly weapons expressly to destroy him; but for many a long year that oaken staff, when ashore, has never been out of my gripe; I never had so much ado to keep it still as when I was nigh him. It may all be very wrong and unchristianlike, but when a lad has never had but one hope in the farthermost seas, and the darkest nights, and the roughest weather, it's hard to be run down and capsized by a fair-weather punt, when he thinks he's just got safe into that port to which his thoughts have always turned, as the needle to the pole."

Mr. Spencer, who was very jealous of any interference on the part of Mr. Asklaw with

what he considered as his peculiar province, the whole conduct of this case, having already officiated as counsel and judge, now took upon himself the department of clerk, and offered to take down this voluntary confession of George Darnell; and when divested of those ebullitions of feeling, with which the first explanation was mixed up, and reduced, as he thought, to technical form, it contained an accurate account of all that part of which the reader is already aware: George's first meeting with Churchill on the cliff, the altercation, the blow, the subsequent conveyance of the wounded man to the cave on the beach, and his having afterwards been carried aboard by the orders of Capt. Collett; but of anything which passed afterwards, (of which I hope the reader is also anxious to be informed,) he could add nothing certain. There had been such a confusion in jumping amid the dashing breakers aboard the lugger, from the

crowded boat, that neither the moment, nor the manner, of Churchill's end had been remarked by him. It was possible that he might have fallen the victim of a casual scuffle, or of a blow dealt in hostility by one of the crew, as the evidence of Capt. Scudd, as to the state of the coble, seemed to infer; or he might, as George had previously imagined, have been washed overboard by the breakers, his weak state preventing him from saving himself by taking effectual hold. But the only fact to which the confession could speak was, that upon drawing up the boat, he was nowhere to be found: a circumstance that, as the revenue cutter was directly after, through the darkness, discerned a-head, had failed to make even then a transient impression on the crew.

The result of this confession of George's was not exactly as he had anticipated, to concentrate upon himself all the blame; for it was

decided by Sir North, with the advice of his "privy council," which, as Mr. Asklaw, from disagreement with the rest of the cabinet, had resigned, now consisted merely of Peter Spencer, that, connecting George's statement with the evidence of Captain Scudd, he George, his confession having been duly signed, should stand committed to the county gaol, as a principal in the wilful murder of Churchill, and Captain Collett, and the rest of his boat's crew, who had carried him aboard, as accessaries after the fact.

As soon as this result was communicated to Lady Gayland, she occupied herself in contriving how Lucy might most speedily, and with the least discomfort, be restored to her friends, which was arranged without much difficulty. But she was afterwards prevented from fulfilling her promise, with which she accompanied the completion of this ar-

rangement, "That she would herself pay her a visit there." For the next post brought letters summoning her to town on legal business connected with her duty as executrix to Sir Joseph, and consequently abridged her intended stay at Hornscliff. But though she cannot accompany the reader there, and he must not expect to revisit Morden Bay in such gay society as the first time, or to find there as happy a home as in the second, yet once again for a short time he is requested to turn his attention towards Bankside Farm.

CHAPTER VII.

> Few years have passed since brightly cross the way
> Lights from each window shot the lengthened ray,
> And busy looks in every face were seen,
> Through the warm precincts of the reigning Queen.
> There fires, inviting, blazed; and all around
> Was heard the tinkling bell's seducing sound:
> The nimble waiters to that sound, from far,
> Sprang to the call, then hastened to the bar,
> Where a glad priestess of the temple swayed,
> The most obedient, and the most obeyed. CRABBE.

AND first, by the way, to stop at the little town of Mayton. The evening had begun to close in on the day of the events described above, when the Widow Westbury, having, unfortunately, no guests to occupy her within, was standing at her front door, the somewhat narrow threshold of which the ample expanse of

her spotless apron now more completely filled than when on first taking up that position, seven years back, she had been herself the most attractive sign to stray travellers on an idle afternoon to induce them to slip in beside her. She had, as usual on such occasions, been looking listlessly up the street, and down the road, when, on turning her head again in the direction of the road leading from Hornscliff, she was struck with the uncommon spectacle of two carriages crowded with persons, apparently both within and without, and attended by others on horseback, coming into town. One short hopeful vision she had time to form, of full bedrooms and an empty larder, before undeceived by observing that they were two hack chaises, and, therefore, the regular undoubted allies of her powerful rival, the Angel, to which, of course, they therefore edged off.

The Widow Westbury was not an envious woman, but one pang she could not suppress at the exuberance of her rival's good fortune, whilst her own house was literally empty, and she turned her head in the opposite direction, to avoid seeing the actual unloading. But she was as much surprised here as at what had met her view in the other direction. It was not market-day, and yet it could be no other than Farmer Darnell whom she beheld riding towards her, and pressing George's pony beyond its natural speed. The first impression of pleasure which the Widow derived from recognising him was, however, as completely destroyed, as had been the half-formed hopes in the other direction, as soon as she made out the extraordinary state in which he arrived. His first words were, as he kicked the pony towards the stable gateway. "Hast seen her, Widow? Hast heard anything on her? Oh!

I'se lost her, she's gone! She's been kidnapped from us."

"What's fashed about, George? tell us, hinny. Is't cart mare's lost, that ye're come on t' galloway?"

"The cart mare, indeed! she might gang and be d—d, for what I'd fash myself about the likes of she. But I ax yer pardon, Widow. It's na th' time for a sinfu' mon to tak' to profane swearing, when he's in sair trouble as I am now. What cared I for hard toimes, for rot i' th' flocks, or blight i' th' crops, so long as I had but her, my own pet lamb, my pride, and my joy—my little Lucy?"

"And sure there won't be any harm come to Miss Lucy, then?" asked the Widow.

"Harm! I trust in mercy, none. But I'se sair flayed aboot her," replied he, in language that would have been hardly intelligible to any but indigenous ears, his provincialism being, as

is often observed to be the case, redoubled by excitement. "And only to think now that I slept so sound all through t' night, when may be she was struggling with them as have *spraited* her away from us. But I made sartain sure she were at her aunt's, where she had boided the night afore; but when morning came, and it were noised about that there had been some fasheous doings on t' beach, I took galloway and rode down to sister Alice's, and when I fooun' my poor darling child had never bin there, I were clean demented, and did not ken which way to gang, but as all t' turnpikes come through Mayton, I thought I'd may be hear some tidings of her here; and I've lossen a good hour, for I thought to come the gainest way straight by the salt-marshes—and t' galloway was matched to get me throughf, as he was like to be—being o'er small to bear me, even on canny groond."

"And if you hav'n't been bogged and are quite dripping wet up to your waist!" interrupted the Widow—"Come in, Richard, I'll see and get you some tidings, and make you comfortable the while."

"Comfort!" replied Richard, contemptuously; "comfort! and where's the comfort ever like to visit me again, but in the sight of my child?"

"But step in a wee bit, and tell me all about it, while Joe gives a feed to the galloway, for he's clean done at present. Is't alone she's missing?"

"No: George never com'd back naither; but I don't count much about that, for he's a messmate about in these parts; and he said maybe he shouldn't return last night. But Painter Churchill wasn't to be found naither."

"Richard, I'd my misgivings when you took that man home with you from here, that

no good would come of it: he's just the sort of soft-spoken chap to take with a young girl. I wish it mayn't be along with he that she's off."

"What, Widow! my own Lucy, that's come of decent folk, and all along been used to have a good roof-top over her head, and bide where she was known and looked up to; she to bemean herself to give up all and follow a vagabond stroller, of her own free mind! that's the least crediblest surmise of all. Hark! what's that ere chap saying about George Darnell?" overhearing the voices of those who were already circulating in the street that it was George Darnell who had been brought there in a chaise, on his way to the county gaol. This, when explained, was sure to be a bitter aggravation of the troubles of Farmer Darnell, who had always loved his nephew better than any thing else in the world, except her whom he was then

seeking; but the first impression made on him by this news was only, that somehow or another it must be connected with the absence of Lucy; and acting upon the idea, he strode across to the Angel, to inform himself, without stopping to ask any farther particulars, or to listen to the Widow's request that he wouldn't show himself at "t'other house" in that unsightly gait. He was however much shocked, when, upon first desiring to be shown to George Darnell, a difficulty was made by the constables in whose custody he was, upon the ground that it was not usual to allow any communication with a prisoner who was on his way to gaol on so grave a charge as murder. This objection being at last surmounted, and the Farmer admitted to George by one of the constables, his parental anxiety again superseding every other feeling, he blurted out, "Sad job in-

deed, George! but feyther before uncle, after all. Hast seen her? Hast heard on her?"

George, who could make every allowance for any one, father or not, considering Lucy before every thing else in the world, also forgot for the moment his own dreadful situation, in the pleasure he felt in dissipating his uncle's fear for his daughter, by informing him of her safety, and that her return home might speedily be expected. After this explanation, the more painful task remained, of detailing to his uncle the particulars of the awful situation in which he had involved himself. In the whole course of his life, George had never known what it was to offend his uncle. Many faults he had certainly committed from his earliest childhood, and scrapes he had got into with his aunt and others about the house; but his uncle had always rather taken his part on these occasions; that in-

dulgence towards venial errors, the result of a disposition not over-strict for himself, and consequently easy for others, being confirmed by his strong partiality for his nephew. This only made it more painful to George to have to break to him the dreadful crime with which he was now charged; of all the circumstances connected with which he gave him a faithful account.

Richard Darnell wished, if possible, not to increase the anguish which he saw his nephew suffered in the relation, but his own disappointment would break through his endeavours to make the least of it.

"It's a baddish piece of work indeed, George," he said; "that must be confessed. I hope and trust you may be gettin' well quit on't, and you're not to doubt that we—that is, I—will do all in my power to help you. But to think, George, how little I would have guessed

that the first sorrow I ever had about my poor child should be of your making; I that always looked forward to your keeping her out of harm's way when I should be gone to my long rest; and that it should be you brought her among all that unseemly society! But I will not say now, how far I'd pushed my hopes that sometime the name of Darnell might be left to share atween you two in peace and honour; but to think that, through you, it should fall out that my own innocent child should have been gaped at by the gentlefolk as a wanton one, the tramping follower of a band of unlawful ruffians!"

"Don't, I pray you, uncle," said George, "don't; no more o' that; it's just the light in which I've been turning it over all this day and night, and you can't any how put that stronger in words than I've had it in my thoughts; only from you it hurts me more,

for it comes, I know, strange to Richard Darnell to say an unkind word when his back's not up: and of myself you never did yet.

The dialogue was here interrupted by the head constable, "Come, gentlemen, the chaise be ready;" in the phrase of the minions of the law, any one becoming a gentleman who is consigned to their custody on any charge, however trivial or flagrant.

The other prisoners, who had been stowed in different apartments, were then brought out, and, upon seeing them, and particularly recognizing Kit Collett again, Richard Darnell, whose fears immediately turned to the breeze all this would raise at home, though anxious to avoid, of his own accord, giving George any farther pain, could not help saying: "Lord! Lord! George, to think how my Missus will fash herself when she hears tell how you brought a ruffian like that ere to sit aside

her and break her bread! I shall have a bad time of it with her, George, all along of you; and if this bean't the very spot where I seed you off from last time! That were another guess voyage you were a-bound on then, George: and who kens but I may have been summut to blame myself? If I'd gi'en you some o' that good counsel your aunt said you needed, and had been a bit more minded what I was after myself, who knows? But good b'ye, George," added he, as his nephew was put into the chaise, "you'll be gettin' through yet, I'se sure."

And, with a heavier heart, though with somewhat a steadier head than when he last saw George drive off from the Angel, poor Richard Darnell returned to the Queen's Head.

CHAPTER VIII.

> O'er all within, the lady-hostess rules,
> Her bar she governs, and her kitchen schools;
> To every guest the appropriate speech is made,
> And every duty with distinction paid. CRABBE.

> Why do you keep alone,
> Of sorriest fancies your companions making?
> Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
> With them they think on. SHAKSPEARE.

IN the mean time there had been an arrival at the Queen's Head. At the desire of Lady Gayland, Lucy Darnell had been sent as far as Mayton, in Sir North's pony-phaeton, accompanied by her own maid, Mam'selle Angelique, or Angel-leek, as Mrs. Jones called her. Lucy's companion was a gay-hearted, good-

humoured little Parisian girl, recently imported by her mistress; and she thought she best accomplished the purpose for which she was sent, and whiled away the tedium of the way, by singing to her in succession scraps of little French chansons; and occasionally, when Lucy seemed most depressed, assuring her in a tone of sympathy, but half in English, half in French, both equally unintelligible to her to whom it was addressed, that she was to take "courage," for that it was impossible they could ever be so cruel as to hang a "*si joli garçon de contrabandist*," as that "*amour*" whom she had seen pass the windows.

In this opinion she was more kind and courteous than sincere; for though George was a fine, handsome, well-made lad, he certainly at no time, and least of all then, accurately answered the definition of the sort of man a French girl frequently styles "*un amour*." Sir North's coachman had found, that though the

Widow Westbury's ale sometimes, for the time being, got the better of memory, memory was always in favour of making another attack upon it, and therefore he drove straight, without asking any questions, to the Queen's Head. Mrs. Westbury having found out who the two ladies were, met Richard Darnell on his return with one of her sweetest smiles, "And what do you think I 've got for you now ?"

But Richard, who was not at that moment in the most amiable frame of mind towards his hostess, from the compunctious recollections which his parting with George had awakened, only replied, making straight for the stable, "It 's of nae use now, Widow, I 'll not tak' a drop of aught you 've gotten, or touch aught you could give till I 've seen my child again."

"And what if it should be just your child herself I 've got to offer you ?"

"What ! what, Lucy ?" and Richard Dar-

nell, pushing past the Widow, rushed into the front parlour, when, upon finding her, the sudden transition from despondency had a most powerful effect upon him. His athletic frame actually shook with agitation, and he blubbered outright, whilst he buried his daughter in his capacious arms.

At this extraordinary spectacle, even Mam'-selle Angelique was not a little touched, though still more astonished at what she thought a wonderful natural phenomenon, and lifting up her hands in amazement, unmixed however with ridicule, exclaimed, "*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! que les ours de ce pays-ci jouent le grand sentiment!*"

The widow having followed our friend into the room, was very anxious, as it was rather late, that they should stay there all night; but the Farmer would not hear of it.

"It 's all very well, Widow; I am always

agreeable, you know, when I 'm by myself, but this is my child, whom I 've only just gettin' back out o' the hands of the Philistines, as my Missus would speak it, and home's the most seemly place for the likes o' she; and besides, Anne, you know this house wouldn't be altogither quite entirely fitting like, you understand."

This being said in a manner that was quite intelligible to the hostess, as conveying a negative of her proposal, she bestirred herself with real zeal to procure them a conveyance homewards, which was speedily obtained in the shape of a taxed cart; and Angelique, after kissing Lucy on both cheeks with the fervour of an old friend, prepared to resume her seat in the phaeton, attended by the coachman alone, and whom she treated, on her return, to the same scraps of the same little "vaudeville airs," to which he occasionally ventured to attempt a somewhat incongruous accompani-

ment; Mrs. Westbury's ale having made such a breach in his habitual respectful deference for the steward's room, as would have been resented by any other member of that upper house, but which the light-hearted French girl easily put up with, as adding to the amusement of the moment.

In the mean time the Farmer, with one arm guiding the reins, and the other still round his recovered treasure, partly as if to be sure he should not again lose her, and partly to save her delicate limbs from some of the dislocating effects of this rough conveyance, pursued his way homeward. And if we once see him safe, we will promise that the story shall not linger long there at present; for Mrs. Darnell, it may be imagined, had not been rendered more companionable by all the late events, and though her fault-finding disposition had been so long used to pick out petty errors, as not to be able at

once to stretch itself so as to comprehend the enormity of George's present offences, yet, perhaps, she was more intolerable when perpetually fishing for minor accompanying grievances, which would have escaped the other parties, in the overpowering disgrace of George's approaching trial.

But Mrs. Darnell was, as her husband had anticipated, particularly indignant upon a ruffian like Collett having sat at her board. "Only to think, if he'd slept here too! as Richard was daft enough to ask him; it's just of a piece wi' all the rest!" And in succession, "George's having left Lucy on the shore alone of such a night, to catch her death of cold, and spoil all her clothes; and Lucy having been never minded that she'd lost her bonnet there, and having come home at last with that queer Frenchified thing instead; and Richard, when he returned from Mayton,

having left George's pony behind, and Joe Hostler having broken his knees in bringing him over the next day;"—all these were enumerated, and each in turn pronounced to be "just of a piece wi' all the rest." The effect of all this upon her husband was to make him enter into a warm and angry defence of himself upon points on which, if the contrite feelings with which he had returned from Mayton had been sustained, he would undoubtedly have pleaded guilty, and sued for mercy.

The peril in which Lucy had lately been, and the alarm which that peril had occasioned to her father, had left so strong an impression on the minds of both as to draw forth more than ever their mutual feelings of affection, and to multiply more than ever little offices of attachment on one side, and protection on the other: there never was a better daughter or a kinder father. For many days after Lucy's

return, Richard Darnell could not bear, without uneasiness, to see her stray beyond the garden gate; and when he went out to his work, she employed almost all the time, till she saw him come back, in devising and arranging his choicest comforts, and endeavouring how to welcome him home with his favourite little indulgences. The result of all this was, that Mrs. Darnell very soon reckoned them a useless pair of idle *do-noughts;* and after many vain attempts to propitiate her mother on that head, Lucy finding that her presence seemed only to open an additional ground of dispute, the effect of these altercations between her parents was to drive her more from home, to seek comfort, where she never sought it in vain, in the society of her aunt. From this in itself she could derive nothing but benefit; but it is matter of doubt whether she, in her present frame of mind, was the better for those solitary

rambles by which these interviews were necessarily both preceded and followed.

During the course of her short acquaintance with Churchill, she had, she hardly knew why, been led gradually to think of him more with the anxious deference due to a superior being, than with the easy consciousness of equality. This feeling, since the melancholy thoughts that he was now no more, had hallowed the memory of their interviews, had increased in intensity to a degree amounting to reverence, almost to adoration; and with it she would have shrunk from mixing any alloy of feminine tenderness; whilst, on the other hand, the shame that George, her cousin, the playmate of her infantine years, should have so fallen, was mixed up with the deepest anxiety for his impending fate, constantly recurring, and as constantly checked by the idea that its indulgence was an injury to Churchill's

murdered shade, whom her excited imagination often pictured to be hanging about her in these much-loved spots in her rambles, which they had together so lately visited.

CHAPTER IX.

> Better be with the dead
> Whom we to gain our place have sent to peace,
> Than on the torture of the mind to lie
> In restless ecstasy. SHAKSPEARE.

> How many pine in want and dungeon glooms,
> Shut from the common air, and common use
> Of their own limbs! THOMSON.

IT has often struck me, that though it is said, in answer to the question, "whom does time gallop withal?—with a thief to the gallows, for, though he goes as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there:" yet, if there is a course which time has to run, which should, if possible, be shortened, it is that

elongated period which, in the greater part of this kingdom, has often to be passed between the commitment of a prisoner and his trial. In many cases nine months may elapse —nine weary months elapse before those whose trials ultimately end in acquittal, can be restored to their family; and of those who are committed, how large a proportion are afterwards proved to have been innocent? or rather, if you please, not proved to be guilty? With the numberless law reforms, previously deemed visionary and impossible, which the last few years have seen actually put in practice, it is not likely that this evil should long be allowed to continue. How the alteration is to be effected, or by what separation of the civil and criminal functions of the judges the courts of law at Westminster Hall could still continue open during the terms, as they are now required to be, and yet commissions

for the dispatch of criminal justice be issued to the country,—must be left to more experienced heads than mine to determine. But the evil of the want of some such arrangement is not confined alone to that one, in itself sufficient, of an innocent man chancing to be detained whilst those seasons have almost revolved during which he should have supported his family by his labour; but it is also not rare that the tendency to crime, which might be epidemic before, is rendered so much more virulent by contagion, that he who went in a petty offender, whether acquitted that time or not, comes out a confirmed criminal; and even on the guilty, on whom certain punishment must be done, how much of the benefit of that example, which is the sole object of punishment, is destroyed by its not being speedy as well as certain! In this age, celebrated above all its other peculiarities for the rapid

succession of fresh sensations, what crime, however atrocious, can fix the attention of the public for nine long months? A rural Burke, or a provincial Bishop, is examined upon a charge, which the infamous notoriety of the first has identified with his name, both as a noun and a verb. The London journals teem with the fullest accounts, headed with the most inviting particulars of the most revolting details. Nine months, perhaps, elapse, and he dies, without confession, is hanged and dissected, and all in three lines of the smallest type in an obscure corner of the fourth page of the same newspaper. Here the benefit of the example is lost, and nobody can tell exactly why. The interval that has elapsed is rarely blamed for it. Nobody out of prison holds the stop-watch for him that is within. I remember, some years back, a fashionable offender, whose name was in every body's

mouth at the time, being sentenced to five years' confinement in —— gaol; his liberation was, at length, announced in the papers. It became the subject of conversation. No one could believe that any how he could have stayed his whole time, and bets were made and lost upon the utter impossibility of the fact. And yet, though to those who had "*thus doft the world* aside, and bid it pass," and had kept no count of time, the fact seemed impossible, to the individual himself, how endless had seemed the early snail-like creeping days, how tedious the last lingering hours!

But though the first part of these reflections were meant for the benefit of my friend George, whom we left on his way to the county gaol, the last seem exclusively devoted to the reader, and as, perhaps, he may think being longer detained by them as cruel as would be George's protracted confinement, I hasten to the week

preceding the one in which the Assizes were to be held.

The time of George's confinement had not extended at all near to the full period to which, if his offence had happened at a different moment, it might have stretched; but was within the average length previous to trial. Still it had been long enough to work a considerable effect upon his feelings, which were naturally good; and with a strongly reviving anxiety that his existence might be preserved, came a steadfast purpose, if his prayer should be granted, to lead a new life. He had passed, as usual, much of his day in solitary meditation, when one evening the door of his cell was opened by the turnkey, who ushered in a respectable-looking gentleman, dressed in black, whom the gaoler proposed to leave alone with George, saying, as he went out, "You may speak your mind freely to this gemman; he 's

come to sarve you in a professional *pint*, and he never meddles but where there 's a chance ; he 's not one of them carrion beaks, as we calls those who hover about them who are as safe bespoke as if they were already doomed."

The professional gentleman, when left alone with George, proceeded to tell him, that from the examination he had already made into his case, he thought it by no means a bad one. The worst point was the confession he had been foolish enough to make and sign ; but he was in hopes that there were informalities and illegalities in the terms of that confession which would at once prevent its bèing recorded as evidence, and therefore also prevent his being obliged to have recourse to a last expedient, which he hinted he thought he had in his power, to procure his acquittal. "But," added he, "you may depend upon it that, if you are only sincere with me, every possible pains shall

be taken, for I am directed to spare no expense."

"But I beg you will spare it, though," said George, "I'm not going to have the hard-earned savings of my poor uncle squandered to save such a prodigal as I have been."

"I beg your pardon, but it is not from your uncle I have received those directions. No part of the costs will fall on him."

"On whom then? for I 've not a stiver to give you, if that 's your hope."

"I am not at liberty to explain farther," replied the solicitor. "But it is sufficient for you to know, that I do not intend any demand on you, and am myself quite easy on the subject. With respect to your uncle, the only communication I have had with him has been on the subject of his daughter's testimony. She was subpœnaed on the other side, but from the conversation I had during my visit to

your uncle, I thought her testimony was so likely to be favourable to you, that, upon hearing this, her previous distress was changed to eagerness on the subject; and she now expresses perfect readiness to come forward."

"Bless her! does she indeed?" said George, "and to speak in my behalf! A word from her cannot fail to do me good: it must tell with every one."

After this they proceeded more in detail to arrange the particulars of the defence. The same professional gentleman had, as he told George, been to Bankside Farm, and upon expressing there the same anonymous commission to spare no expense in the defence, Lucy knew not to whom she could trace, at the same time, the will and the power so to act, except, perhaps, to the Lady who had been so kind to her at Hornscliff Abbey.

The evening preceding the day of trial at

length arrived. This was, as usual on such occasions, fixed for Friday, as was considerately explained to George by the turnkey, that he might have four-and-twenty hours more to prepare, in case of any awkward result, as murderers must die within eight-and-forty hours of conviction; and, as Sunday does not count, they, by this arrangement, gain one day more.

Lucy came into the town on that evening, accompanied by her father, and also by her aunt, who had upon this occasion made the effort to leave a home from which she had never stirred for many years, conceiving it to be her duty to support her beloved niece through this painful trial, and knowing that, if she did not go, her sister-in-law would have thought she must: and Alice was aware that her mother's presence must inevitably be the source of additional, though unintentional, torment to Lucy:

It was settled, that on no account would it be proper for Lucy to visit George in prison, even if her character of witness would not have prevented her from obtaining admission; but Alice Darnell, by the indulgence of the governor of the prison, had a long interview with her unfortunate nephew, and, as he expressed himself, it was from that alone that he had derived the only true consolation of which he had for long partaken. But poor Alice's efforts to maintain her composure before him, combined with the unusual exertion which the whole expedition had occasioned her, had so shattered her already broken spirits, that she was utterly unequal to accompany her niece to court next morning, and it was with her father alone, that Lucy attended there.

The Grand Jury had, the day before, found a "true bill" against George Darnell for "wil-

ful murder;" and against Christopher Collett, and three other of the smugglers, as accessaries after the fact; and had thrown out the bills against the others.

CHAPTER X.

> Are you acquainted with the difference
> That holds the present question in the court?
> Is not this the boy redeemed from death?
>
> SHAKSPEARE.
>
> Can the sea yield up its dead alive?

THE Judge took his seat on the bench at nine o'clock: on one side of him was the high-sheriff, and on the other sat an acquaintance of the sheriff's, a fair-haired good-looking young man, who seemed a silent but apparently an interested spectator of all the proceedings; and to him the Judge turned frequently during what followed, making easy courteous remarks, occa-

sionally in a tone of levity which perhaps did not quite become the person from whom they emanated, or the occasion on which they were expressed: nor did they seem to be particularly acceptable to him to whom they were addressed, for he very faintly re-echoed his Lordship's chuckling accompaniment to his own pleasantry.

The prisoners having been placed at the bar, and the pleadings having been opened from his first brief by Mr. Spencer, a proceeding which in any hands always seems calculated to make the matter a thousand times more unintelligible to a simple-minded jury, the case was stated by a senior counsel, whose practice was so exclusively confined to the criminal court, that it was said of him, by the witlings below him, "that he never took any daily exercise but on the *rope-walk.*" The first witness then called was Lucy Darnell. This was an awful mo-

ment for poor George, when on such an occasion he heard that name shouted in the court by the crier, and taken up by the javelin-men.

Except that one moment when, as he was brought back handcuffed, he had met her half distracted on the beach, he had not seen her since they parted in anger before the cave. And now, as she appeared at this summons and mounted the elevated witness-box, a murmur of admiration ran through the court, so little did her appearance coincide with what any one who had not seen her, had formed to themselves as their idea of the sort of girl who was likely to be mixed up in a transaction of this kind. The effect was universal. Even the old Judge expressed his favourable feelings in rather too lively a sally to the fair young man beside him. Mr. Bailey senior, the leading counsel for the prosecution, altered his usual address to

persons in her situation, of "my good girl," into "Miss Darnell." Tutored as she had been by her aunt, and determined as she was not to cast her eyes to the bar, Lucy got through all the first questions tolerably well, interspersed as they were with repeated desires from Mr. Bailey, "that she would raise her voice," and "lift up her head," and "look at my Lord and the gentlemen of the jury;" and at length, interrupted by a request, conveyed by him in an unusually courteous manner, that she would remove her bonnet,—a suggestion offered to him who made it by a learned brother, who, from where he sat, could not see her face,—she chose rather to comply at once with this request, than to make any difficulties, and in consequence, the graceful contour of her face and throat, except where partially concealed by the luxuriant clusters of her fine light-brown hair, became visible to all. This was

followed by another of those general murmurs of approbation peculiarly remarked in courts of justice, because, perhaps, there least of all they ought to find vent.

To all the first questions, as, "What 's your name?" "Where do you live?" "What is your father?" "Do you know George Darnell?" "Did you know a person of the name of Churchill?" "Do you remember the evening of the 19th of the month of ——?" the reader will readily have anticipated her answers, and they were given with the same facility, which any of my readers themselves, if they have paid courteous attention to these pages, could have replied. But when it came to the act in question, and she was required to speak accurately to the blow given, old Bailey and his young witness no longer pulled so well together. She having stated that she was so far off at the time, that she could not speak

positively as to anything more than seeing the deceased fall: it was then again, "Come, my good girl, you must try and recollect yourself." For Mr. Bailey, perhaps, suspecting that there was a flaw in George's confession, was very anxious to have it confirmed on this point. At last, not being able to weather this difficulty, he was provoked to say, "Come, my good girl, if the deceased Churchill had been your sweetheart, instead of the prisoner at the bar, I think this is not exactly the sort of evidence you would have given." At this, one of the prisoner's counsel, who had been affecting to take notes, but who was, in fact, sketching the witness's profile on a scrap of paper before him, finding his avocation interrupted by the flood of tears which burst from her at this unjust remark, addressed the Judge, saying, "My Lord, my learned friend forgets this is his own witness." The Judge was, for a moment, pre-

vented from replying, by the amusement he seemed to experience from the fair young man beside him, who probably, from being easily excited, and unused to the decorum required in courts of justice, had started up, as if to resent the insult offered to the young person, to whose testimony he had throughout been very attentive. His Lordship smiled for a moment, and then phlegmatically said,

" Mr. Bailey, you may as well not persevere in these remarks."

As soon as the poor witness was sufficiently composed to be enabled to go on with her testimony, she was farther interrogated with respect to the deceased, his habits and character, and whether he was likely to provoke offence. To all of which she replied warmly and fervently in his favour. The examination in chief being concluded, the junior sketching counsel on the other side would have pro-

ceeded to ask her some questions, but, as the solicitor for the defence had complied with the directions to spare no expense, he had engaged Mr. Serjeant Leaderly, who had then been pleading in the other court, and having just been summoned, the consequence was, an immense bustle and rustling of silk gowns, and many obtrusive heads were somewhat roughly tapped by the javelin-men, to make room for the learned Serjeant, and at length he arrived, and took his place on the seat immediately under the bench, when the Judge handed over a paper to him, with,

"Take a sandwich, brother Leaderly; they have been sent me by my learned brother in the other court. I suppose, as they are *hung* beef, he thought the venue ought to lie here; at any rate, I can't deny that *he's* on the *civil side* now," chuckling audibly, and turning round to the fair young man for applause, who, by

the constrained expression of his countenance, seemed to think that the ermine and the toga, no more than grey hairs, became a fool and a jester.

Mr. Serjeant Leaderly, mumbling his sandwich the while, and turning over the folios of his brief, at length began:

"My good girl, you knew the deceased (what's his name?) Churchill; did he ever himself follow the nautical calling?"

"Sir?"

"Was he involved in these smuggling transactions himself?"

"I believe not, Sir."

"What was his habit while he resided in your house?"

"His habit was to walk out with me, whenever mother would let him."

"Yes, yes, I dare say; but I don't mean that.—Did he ever wear a short round-cut jacket?"

"I can't remember that he ever did."

"Will you undertake to say that he never did wear a short round-cut jacket?"

"No, I cannot."

"Will you pretend to deny that he ever did wear a short round-cut jacket?"

"No; I cannot say positively that he never did."

The turn of this examination having so little to do with the previous course of the trial, of which Mr. Serjeant Leaderly had not heard a word, surprised several. And one or two briefless juniors who were sitting together, whispered,

"A short round-cut jacket! What can Leaderly be driving at? Spencer, that's you he's describing. Spencer, that must be a cut at you."

"No," retorted the other, "it's the reverse of a cut at Spencer, for he seems to think thereby to hang a tail."

But Leaderly, perhaps, not having had

time to do more than ascertain that this was a principal witness for the prosecution, and thinking it his business to discredit her, evidently somehow imagined he had made a point, and he continued,

"Then do you mean to tell me, Lucy Darnell, that you cannot answer my question simply and decidedly, yes or no?"

"I cannot say positively."

"Oh! you cannot say positively. We must try somehow, and bring you to the point; you will recollect you are on your oath, or is that a fact you do recollect?"

"Yes, Sir, certainly," said Lucy, mildly but firmly.

At this moment a messenger from the other court whispered, from behind the railing, to Mr. Serjeant Leaderly, that the important cause of Scurry *versus* Waitfort was just called on; upon which the Serjeant, nodding apart, said,

"And being upon your oath, which, it appears, you do recollect, you mean to tell my lord and the gentlemen of the jury, that you cannot recollect whether Churchill either did or did not ever wear a short round-cut jacket?"

"No, I cannot, indeed."

"My Lord, I shall ask the witness no farther questions," said the Serjeant, with the self-satisfied air of a man who had settled the whole business; and gathering up his papers into his bag, and with the same rustling of silk gown and tapping of intervening heads, he made his exit. And this was all the benefit George derived from the first lawyer on the circuit having been engaged in his behalf.

At this period of the trial the Judge interfered. He was, or he would never have been on the bench, barring that one defect, an un-

fortunate incontinence of waggery, a very quick-sighted person as to the weak points in a cause; and when he could exercise the power of retention upon the flow of his pleasantry till a fitting occasion, he was an excellent judge. He said, "Gentlemen of the jury, I don't think this will do at all. It don't appear clear that the body of this unfortunate gentleman was ever found. Now, Lucy Darnell, listen to me; don't distress yourself. I am not going to ask you any question which need have that effect. It appears that you knew this Churchill very well, and therefore would have been able to recognize him however changed. Now don't turn your head away, nobody's going to frighten you; look at me, and answer my question. When was the last time you saw Churchill, dead or alive?"

As the Judge finished his question, Lucy,

preparing to answer it, raised her eyes in the direction she had been desired; a ray of sunshine, through the sky-light above, fell full upon the countenance of the fair young man on the bench; and Lucy, uttering a piercing scream, dropped lifeless at the bottom of the witness-box. The impression which had produced this sudden effect was, that the person before her was no other than Churchill, and though somewhat changed in many respects from the state in which she had lately known him, yet still gazing on her with the same fond interest which his countenance had expressed on the night on which they last had been parted.—It certainly was Churchill, or rather Lord Castleton, she then beheld.

It was thought best for her recovery to remove her from the court, though no one guessed the cause of this emotion, which was

attributed to the severe discipline, in the shape of cross examination, to which she had been subjected; and as no one besides Lord Castleton suspected that his living apparition had produced this powerful effect, he, without any danger of enlightening them on that subject, to which he was still averse, speedily afterwards himself left the court. The reader will foresee George's acquittal, from the turn which the Judge's examination had taken, because, however the matter might have been for a time involved in mystery from the confused nature of the depositions taken by Mr. Spencer, upon enquiry it turned out, that there was no proof of any murder having been actually committed, from any dead body having been discovered. We shall therefore take the liberty of inviting the reader also to leave the court, as what has been recorded

was only so far as was thought necessary for the progress of the story, and with no ambition of broaching a paraphrase of the celebrated "Causes Celèbres" of a neighbouring country; and still less with the bad taste of attempting a parody of our own.

CHAPTER XI.

'Twas strange: in youth, all action, and all life,
Burning for pleasure, not averse from strife,
Woman—the field—the ocean—all that gave
Promise of gladness, peril of a grave,
In turn he tried. BYRON.

There be land rats, and water rats, land thieves, and water thieves. SHAKSPEARE.

IT is always irksome, in the progress of an "ower true tale," when any circumstance has to be explained through the medium of an extraordinary coincidence, knowing, as one does, that any instance of the kind, particularly the fortuitous appearance of a necessary agent at the appointed moment, occurring as

such things do in actual life, and passing unheeded, yet when recorded on paper they are received with a revulsion of incredulity. The chances of events sometimes mould themselves into strange combinations. It was but two or three years back that two men threw themselves down at the same day and the same hour, one from the leaning tower of Pisa, the other from St. Mark's at Venice. There could have been no possible connexion between these acts. But if a similar coincidence had been interwoven in a framework of fiction, it would have caused the manufacture to be rejected as unworkmanlike. If, on the other hand, the same sort of combination, had favoured a superstitious presentiment, it would have been taken as an undeniable confirmation of the preternatural.

I have volunteered this preface, though hardly, I think, a necessary one, before ex-

plaining the manner in which Lord Castleton's life was preserved: to do which effectually, it will be necessary to allude a little to one or two incidents in his early life. It will have been collected, though merely from Alice Darnell's collateral tale, that he lost his father when very young; and it will also have been inferred from the same source, that, during his earlier years, he could have seen but little of his mother, who had lived separate from her husband on the Continent. Young Somers remained under his grandfather's roof, whilst his mother was amusing herself abroad, and his father was constantly shifting about in country quarters with his militia regiment. His infantine years would therefore have been deprived of any but mercenary female superintendence, except for the unremitting care of his foster-mother: whose affection for him was certainly too pure and truly maternal,

to be attributed to any mercenary motives. She had sought, and easily obtained from his grandfather, the permission to continue her care of him long, very long after he had completely outgrown the discharge of her original functions. The only condition with which this request was mixed up, was not for remuneration, for that, being in easy circumstances, was not an object, though, left to Lord Castleton, it followed as a matter of course,—but was, that she might be allowed to have her own son, the foster-brother of young Somers, also under the roof. This was thought, at the time, rather an advantage than otherwise, by the grandfather of our hero; but it turned out quite the contrary, for the characters of both the parties concerned. It accustomed the young heir to require a dependent companion, and it habituated the future yeoman to notions of expense quite beyond his

rank in life. One thing, however, it certainly promoted, a lasting attachment between the boys: this, on the side of Somers, subject to the alloy of caprice, and occasional forgetfulness of a superior; on the part of Harry, ripening into that feeling of utter devotion to its object, which the relation of foster-brother in the earlier stages of society was said constantly to produce; and which has not been entirely without example in our own times.

The earliest event which made a permanent impression on either of the boys, was the melancholy end of Colonel Somers. Old Lord Castleton, being at the time it happened very infirm, and almost bedridden, had, upon being informed of his son's self-inflicted death, sent Nurse Carter to make the necessary arrangements for his remains.

She had, upon her return from the sea-

port where it was mentioned he had destroyed himself, collected her two young charges round her, and, with the irresistible desire of her age and station to make the most of a shocking story, had not spared them the slightest particular of what she had heard and seen. Much of this, of course, only served to frighten them out of their wits for many nights afterwards, but, as she put it in the shape of warning, she took a locket which she had found round the deceased's neck, and hung it round young Somers, saying, "I know not what this may mean, but your father wore it till his death; do you wear it till yours, and mayhap the sight of it may sometime save you from rashly daring the same fate."

Old Lord Castleton lived enough to appoint guardians for his grandson, quite independent of the mother, whose second marriage he much disapproved. The immediate effect of most of

this was, that young Somers remained much longer than perhaps he ought to have done with the Carters. But at length he was sent to a public school, and from thence to the University; and of course, for some time, lost sight entirely of young Henry Carter. But the latter had been long enough with him to contract habits which did not exactly enable him to confine his attention to the process which intervenes between the plough and the reaping-hook. On the contrary, his exclusive preferences of the horse-race and the cock-pit soon engrossed him entirely. His mother did not live long enough to suffer all the uneasiness that these confirmed habits, on his part, would have caused her, but died in the firm confidence that the day of the return of her dear young Lord, when of age, to take possession of the lands of his ancestors, would be the date of the commencement of a brilliant career

for the only other object of her equally divided solicitude, his early playmate and foster-brother.

In the mean time Harry Carter fell, step by step, into the most desperate courses, and went on from one extravagance to another. He was at length so completely ruined that he was obliged to decamp, and make for the nearest seaport, hardly knowing whether he would seek out his patron, who was still on the Continent, or start for America with some choice companions, who were thither bound, and who tried to persuade him to try his luck with them. His option, however, on this subject, was rendered superfluous by a press-gang, who entered the public-house where they were assembled, and carried them all on board a tender; from thence Harry Carter, in due time, was transferred to a man-of-war, which was to cruise in the Mediterranean. Though

not inclined to work if he could help it,—when he could not, he made the best of a bad job, and soon became an able seaman.

It so happened, that once being ashore at a small retired bay on the Island of Sicily, he and others of his messmates got into a broil with some of the natives, and, as it had originated in an imputed act of sacrilege on their part, they were in great danger from the offended feelings of the priest-ridden peasants, who, congregating in numbers around them, cut off their retreat to their boats. Harry Carter, who was foremost in the defence, though he had not been a ringleader in the outrage, was himself sore beset, when a party of English travellers, who had been making the tour of the island on foot, coming up at the moment, interfered between them at no little risk to themselves; which danger was however removed, as soon as they came to

explain matters; the quarrel having originated in misapprehension, and the attack having been provoked by the universal impatience of Englishmen, who, if from ignorance of the language of a people they cannot make use of their tongues, immediately have recourse to their hands. Harry Carter at once, through all the alterations of intervening years, recognized the playmate of his youth, Somers, now Lord Castleton, who was much hurt at the condition in life, that of a common sailor, in which he now found his foster-brother; which he could not help in some degree attributing to his own forgetfulness and neglect. But Carter would not allow him to reproach himself on the subject; and, as his duty prevented his farther stay, the parting between the foster-brothers was as sudden as the meeting was unexpected, and, in preparing to shove off, Harry Carter said, " It's not like we should

often meet again, as we used to do, my Lord: but now I have seen you, you 've come like a guardian angel upon me, and I shall only pray that, if there ever should be an occasion in which you should stand in need of the like assistance, that may be the moment I may next cross your path."

And this fervently devoted expression of his wishes, was heard and granted; for they next met at that most critical moment in Morden Bay.

At the Peace, Henry Carter had been discharged from the navy, and soon afterwards falling in with Kit Collett, a free trader's life had too many temptations for his own confirmed irregular habits for him to resist the offers made him by that person to join him in "*La Pie voleuse.*" It so happened, that, being one of the sharpest and cleverest of the crew, he had been employed by his Captain confidentially, not long before this last venture,

upon a line of coast on which they had not previously made a descent. He was sent to make a survey of it, and arrange matters with some loose characters in the neighbourhood for furthering their scheme.

In the early part of the labours of that eventful evening, Harry Carter had worked with all the zeal of a principal in stowing the kegs, thinking that much of the responsibility as to the success of the venture devolved on him who had so warmly counselled it. But when the wounded man was shot into the cave, by two of his comrades, with much less care than they had bestowed upon the other more valuable burthens with which they had been charged, Harry Carter's natural good-nature induced him to devote a little more attention than any of his messmates seemed inclined to pay to their fellow-creature. This kindly disposition soon acquired an unexpected induce-

ment to continue its good offices. The first thing that peculiarly excited his attention was, that upon attempting to stanch the wound which was just above the temple, he found that the hair which had clotted into it was false, being part of a wig which covered a plentiful crop of natural hair, of a different colour. The cave was already obscure, yet the light, crisply curling locks, which he now discovered, seemed to him to be such as he had never seen but on one person before. The apparent impossibility of a surmise which supposed so altered a condition in life, at first staggered him; yet it was evident, from the discovery he had just made, that the person, whoever he was, had for some reason or another assumed a disguise. It was difficult, even if the wounded man had been in a state to reply to verbal inquiries, to make any safely, whilst all his comrades were perpetually passing. He be-

thought him of the locket which his mother had put round Somers's neck when a boy, with the positive injunction, never, under any circumstances, to remove it. This injunction, he knew, for some time had been rigidly observed. He remembered the form and shape of it himself, and he determined to be decided in his conduct by the circumstance of finding the locket there or not.

"If it is there," thought he, "not only shall I feel sure that it really is my foster-brother, but I shall feel myself enforced as much by my mother's memory, as by my own more recent vow, to do all in my power to save him."

It was while endeavouring to ascertain this point by searching within his clothes that Lucy found him, as she thought, employed in plunder. If he had not actually had his hand on the locket when she addressed him, the

obvious interest taken in him by a girl in that rank of life would again have staggered him, as he could only imagine that the disguise must have been temporarily assumed for the purpose, perhaps, of detecting that very illicit act in which they were then engaged. But still the locket was there, and in neither that nor the features, as far as he could discern them, could he be mistaken; and therefore his determination was fixed, at all risks, to save him. He was aware, however, that much immediate risk to himself might be incurred, without even a chance of effecting that object. Any open assistance would now have been set down for mutiny, and there is no legal discipline so severe as that which binds lawless men together in moments of danger. But he quickly formed in his head a plan which he thought could not fail.

He had been celebrated as one of the best swimmers in the navy: it was, then, without any uneasiness that he assisted to convey Castleton to the boat, and even helped to shove it off, knowing that the lugger would come quite as near the shore as the surf would permit; and the moment when the smugglers would be in all the confusion of holding on till the coble was empty, was that he had fixed for the execution of his intended escape with Castleton, trusting to the darkness of the night and the roar of the breakers to assist him in escaping unobserved. Till this time arrived, he sat stanching the temple of the wounded man with his hand, that he might not be too much exhausted by previous loss of blood to be able to sustain even his passive share in the escape. The confusion of the smugglers at that moment was increased by hearing that another sail, sup-

posed to be a revenue cutter, was in sight; and this confusion was even more serviceable to him than he had anticipated.

Not only did he succeed in dropping overboard himself unnoticed, but also in pulling Castleton after him: in supporting himself to do which, his bloody hand had made that strongly marked impression, as of struggling fingers, which Captain Scudd had naturally enough interpreted to have been left by some one who had endeavoured to save himself when thrown over. Bearing his still unconscious burthen lashed to him in that manner which a skilful swimmer knows would least impede his own efforts, it is possible that he may have risen for a moment on the breakers in the manner Lucy imagined she had seen; but, carefully directing his course where he knew there was least surf and easiest landing, Carter

made for the shore,, which he reached just in time, being almost too much exhausted by the double weight he had carried to have been able to have struggled farther.

CHAPTER XII.

And I have thrust myself into this maze,
Haply to wive and thrive as I may best.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration.

ONCE on shore, while pausing to recover himself, he gazed with a proud feeling of satisfaction on the still insensible being whom he had thus providentially rescued; for Carter had been engaged in too many frays not to know that the wound was not in itself dangerous, though a severe one; but he also knew enough of the comrades he had just left to feel certain that

upon the first confirmation of the report of a revenue cutter nearing them, which he had heard just as he was jumping overboard, a second blow, more sure, would inevitably have fallen on their already half-lifeless victim: and, tied in a sack with stones, he would too surely have sought the bottom, to prevent the possibility of his bearing witness against them.

As soon as Harry Carter was sufficiently recovered again to take up the motionless body, which as yet showed no symptom of returning life, he made at once for a lone hut in a cleft between two rocks, from which an almost impassable road led up into the open country.

Here, as he expected, he found a light cart in the charge of one of the loose characters who were in league with the smugglers, and whom he had directed to meet him there on that evening so provided, in case "*La Pie voleuse*" should

have chanced to bring, as part of her cargo, any smaller articles of more value, which might as well have been removed, under the cover of the darkness, to one of those most complete of all possible devices for concealment which are found in the centre of a populous town.

His confidant was not a little surprised when he beheld him bearing, as he thought, a corpse, instead of, as he had expected, lace gloves or ladies' shoes.

" I say, messmate, holloa!" he cried out, " this is no go, if you 've been after a burking job here. You told me I was to carry light articles, and you fig me off with a stiff 'un. I was never in the mole-catching line myself, and shouldn't like to be twigged grubbing."

" Hold your peace, you lubber," said Carter, " the man 's not dead, nor like to die; and if he doesn't, this will turn out the best job you

ever did yet of all your days. If you 'll only just carry him to yon place where we were to have taken t'other things, you 'll have earned as good a brace of RAGS, as sure as your name 's John Smutt; and perhaps ten times as many more, if you 're only just mum a bit, and don't say a word about all this, if we find he wishes you not."

"Oh! I 'll say nout aboot it. The objections are all about doing it; once done, there 'll be little to be gained, I take, to either of us, by having it blowed. But, let us feel:—why, his fin moved—sure enough, he 's alive. Well, that 's another guess sort of case, certainly; so I 'll just pop him in here, where he 'll lie as snug as possible; and I only hope he 'll live to think of that hush-money you talk about. What 's it?—ten times ten. Why, that 's a hundred pounds. A hundred pounds!!"

The journey thus arranged was performed

expeditiously, and without observation, in the covered cart; and by break of day they reached the large inland town, to which they were bound. Here, in the first instance, Castleton was conveyed to an obscure lodging, as Carter thought that there he would be better concealed, till with returning consciousness he might himself be consulted, how far he wished his late adventure to be known. It will at once be seen, that if Castleton was not anxious that it should be made the subject of enquiry, the less that was said about it the better for. Carter himself, who was now rather in an awkward position with both the parties in any investigation that might be undertaken.

The contusion on the temple, which was Castleton's principal injury, though a severe one, quickly progressed towards recovery, under the anxious care of his present attendant; and he now suffered most from the weak-

ness ensuing from loss of blood, by a cut which he had also received in his fall.

His faculties were, after a time, perfectly restored; and upon recognising Carter, and ascertaining the particulars of his escape, his gratitude to his deliverer knew no bounds. His first step was to have himself moved to a more decent lodging, still without assuming his own name, and to confirm Carter's bargain with his confederate, of a hundred pounds, upon condition of his saying nothing about the sort of cargo his cart had contained. This sum was to be paid in six months, provided that at the end of the time nothing was known about the adventure; a remote date for payment being suggested by Carter, who thought that his acquaintance would be more easily constrained by future expectation than by past favours; and in this Castleton acquiesced, being very anxious, for a variety of mixed rea-

sons, that his late adventure should not be made the subject of gossip.

When almost recovered from the effects of his late accident, Henry Carter one day brought him the circumstantial account of the arrest of George Darnell and the gang of smugglers, and of their committal, George as his murderer, and the others as accessaries after the fact. Castleton could not for a moment doubt what ought to be his conduct under such circumstances: at once to show himself to the authorities, who had entertained the charge, and to state the facts of the case; bearing, as he did, in his own living person the only utterly incontrovertible evidence against the truth of such an accusation. But it was not so easy for him to make up his mind to take this step, as to convince himself that it was what he ought to do; and he at length succeeded in persuading his reason, that, peculiarly situated

as he was, there were very good excuses (he went no farther than that) for his adopting a different line of conduct.

He had ulterior, and, as he thought, truly beneficial views for the parties most interested, in his decision of this question; and he felt his pride would prevent him from maintaining his present intentions, if a public disclosure of all the facts was to take place. The sight of Lucy's agony at his sufferings, and her energetic interference on his behalf on the beach, hallowed as that impression had been by his again relapsing into death-like insensibility, had removed any lingering doubts he had entertained as to making her his wife; and that was now the object nearest his heart. His principal notion in assuming the disguise, and seeking Bankside Farm, in execution of the project he had formed, was to be himself sure that the person who could, in such an assumed character, win

her affections, must be loved for himself alone, and that he might then enjoy the happy consciousness that his bride had not been influenced in her preference of him, by any of the outward advantages of his worldly situation: advantages which he had found not without their influence upon women even in the highest rank. Yet this was a satisfaction which he wished as much as possible to keep to himself. Indeed he did not feel sure that the success of the very object he had in view would appear to the fashionable denizens of the world so self-evident, if they were merely made acquainted with the simple facts of the case. They would be apt, without enquiring into the way in which he might have won her affections, to imagine it just possible, if they knew from how low a rank in life he had raised the future Lady Castleton, that she might be influenced in her acceptance of him by those extraneous

advantages of fortune, which must certainly have as much weight with her, as with those who, from want of contrast, could not be expected to value them even so highly as the low-born peasant. It was, therefore, no part of his scheme, that it should ever be precisely known in the world who Lady Castleton had been; and in directing his steps a second time towards Morden Bay, he was much decided by thinking, that if further observation there confirmed his early recollections, not only the peculiarly delicate and refined nature of Lucy's beauty might, unquestioned, bear transplanting into any rank in life, but from the very secluded spot where she had been brought up, and the retired habits of her parents, her former home need never be traced, even by the prying and the curious. All these were conditional accompaniments of his scheme, without which he would never have formed it origi-

nally; and without which, even now, desperately in love with Lucy as he was, or thought he was, he would still hesitate as to its accomplishment. And yet all these encouraging considerations were threatened with complete overthrow, if, by discovering himself, in order to procure George's release, he was obliged to disclose any circumstance of his late adventures. The very extraordinary nature of the facts he would have to relate, coupled, as they would be, with his own well-known name, would immediately circulate the wonderful tale in every shape of paragraph, pamphlet, and perhaps ballad. Then the numberless jokes which would be circulated, about the supposed rivalry between "The Noble Lord" and "The Smuggler Cousin," to which the facts of the case, when disclosed, would give more than a plausible appearance of truth! Then that very lawless lad, with all the innuendoes about doubtful prefer-

ence between them, was to be his cousin. His cousin! A convicted smuggler! For though his own appearance would free him from the charge of wilful murder, the revenue prosecutions would only be confirmed by the publicity thus given to the transactions in which they had originated; whereas, if by any other means the danger from the first prosecution for murder could be averted, without his being obliged to appear himself ostensibly in it, he did not despair subsequently, by the exertion of his interest indirectly, to procure the other to be dropped, at least as against George and the crew. As all these considerations passed in succession through his mind, they might have kept him undecided how to act; but the increased force of his attachment to Lucy, craving, urgent, and engrossing as it then was, if it still could not be dignified with the name of love, in its most exalted sense, impelled him

to take the course most likely to get the better of these difficulties, which he foresaw might yet interfere to prevent his making her his wife.

He, therefore, sent for his confidential man of business, to whom he told all, and from whom he was happy to hear that the conceited carelessness with which Mr. Spencer had perverted all the facts which had been prepared for him in the examination before the magistrate, rendered it most probable that an acquittal might be easily procured without his being obliged to disclose himself; and his lawyer having, in consequence, been entrusted with the management of the defence, Lord Castleton entered the court with the intention of only coming forward himself as a last resource.

CHAPTER XIII.

Your father's image is so hit in you,
His very air, that I should call you
As I did him.

Surely I saw a form, a proud, bright form,
Standing beside my couch.

When Lord Castleton had made his arrangement for watching the progress of the trial, and the conduct of the Darnell family in it, one of the last enquiries he had made previously to going to court, was the exact situation of the lodgings they had taken in town; and thither he directed his steps upon leaving

the court by a different door from that which Lucy had been carried out.

Alice Darnell had remained in a most painful state of agitating suspense, pacing the little parlour in which she had been left by her brother and his daughter. It was so long since she had heard the busy hum of men; the little lodging where she had now been left to her solitary fancies and thickening recollections, was so like one to which she had been used in happier days, then long gone by; the Babel sound of many voices in the peculiarly thronged streets, were such as had not met her ear since on that dreadful night she had forced her way through the crowds of the theatre, to learn her husband's fate: all these combined, had worked her into a dreadful state of nervous excitement, when a knock was heard at the street door, and she opened that of the apartment at the head of the stairs, thinking that it was

probably some one from the courts, bringing her intelligence.

A stranger ascended the obscured staircase, and Alice, upon his raising his head slowly, receded from the door without uttering a word, but keeping her eyes intently fixed upon him as he entered the room. She pressed her hands against her brain, muttering, " Somers! Churchill! Who is it? Oh merciful powers, deprive me not of my senses! The grave might, for some special purpose, have been made to render up or one or other of these departed spirits; but this confused vision which recalls them both at once, can only be the creature of my disordered imagination."

" Miss Alice Darnell," said Castleton, " excuse this intrusion, I entreat you. It was your niece I sought, for the purpose of offering her an explanation of my conduct. I regret that my sudden appearance should have so

discomposed you, who, as well as the rest of your family, will have much to forgive in my past conduct; but I trust, that the future will not give you any thing of which to complain."

"Who is it then? Churchill indeed restored to life; but not as I saw you last! The resemblance is much stronger! the hair so like! But I must not pursue that train, or indeed think of myself at all, if I mean to keep my spirits and my senses to support others. But if you are here, what is the trial then about? Where is my niece — my poor misguided nephew?"

"I will explain all to you, Miss Darnell. The manner in which I have always heard Lucy speak of you, forbids any mystery where you are the person concerned. Your nephew either now is, or soon will be, safe. And for your beloved niece—allow me, before I explain

myself farther, to ask—I am sure my Lucy could never conceal any thing from you—Do you think—you know not how much hangs on your answer—do you think she could be really, truly happy, in sharing somewhat a more exalted lot in life with him whom she only knew as the poor painter Churchill? Perhaps it has been providentially ordained that I should have this opportunity of asking a candid reply to that question from you. If your answer must dash my hopes at once, it may be in mercy ordained that I should hear it from you, that I may no longer unwarrantably trespass on the tranquillity of one whose interest I may have failed in exciting. But I implore you, if you can give me any encouragement to think otherwise, to do so now. A young and artless girl may perhaps succeed in concealing the nature of her sentiments from him who seeks to awaken partiality; but—forgive me

if I address you thus the first time of our meeting; —but it seems to me, that through Lucy, I already know you thoroughly; and all my hopes depend upon the impression of her feelings towards myself formed by you,—her ever watchful guardian genius, from whom she never could have attempted concealment."

"It was even thus that Somers looked—it was even thus that Somers pleaded; and it is not by my lips that such pleadings can be pronounced vain," said Alice Darnell, half to herself. "Strange similarity!" she continued, "yes, even to the inexplicable mystery of the transaction from which all the mischief in my own case arose." Then more decidedly addressing herself to her anxiously expectant listener, she said: "Forgive me if, till you have completely cleared away all the mystery in which your proceedings have been involved, I must decline at present giving any answer to

your enquiries—enquiries which even then you would be hardly authorised in making of me, and which, perhaps, I should be as little justified in answering for another; for imprudent as is that woman who herself opens her heart to him who conceals his intentions, most unpardonable would she be who, under similar circumstances, betrayed the confidence of another. Not only should my niece's sentiments, if favourable, not through me be known, but, if necessary, they should themselves be checked, and controlled, till your explanation is complete."

"Excuse me, if, in my anxiety to have my doubts removed, I have myself omitted to be as explicit as I had intended. I commenced by stating that from you I would have no concealment. But from a name which I have heard you several times appear to connect with me, I thought you had some clue to the know-

ledge I came to impart. Your niece has only known me as Churchill, but Somers is my name, though Castleton is the title by which I am called. But you are ill — are agitated —" interrupting himself, in sudden alarm. For as Castleton had proceeded in this apparently natural explanation, the gaze of Alice had become more intensely fixed on his countenance, and at the abrupt mention of that fatal name, so long enshrined in the secret recesses of her heart, the sorrows of years passed from her mind, and for one short fleeting moment she believed she saw before her the lover of her youth, the husband of her heart — the adored, the departed Somers. All the blood in her exhausted frame seemed to rush to her face, as starting from her chair, she staggered one step towards him, wildly exclaiming: "Somers! my own, my lost—my God! no—Forgive me, you shall know all."

And then, bursting into an agonizing flood of tears, she gradually resumed her cómposure enough to answer the kind enquiries of her astonished visitor; who, greatly touched and alarmed at the extent of her emotion, almost forgot his own urgent anxieties, and asked with great interest how he had unintentionally distressed her.

"No, go on, my Lord, I entreat you; one moment's bewildering astonishment at the disclosure you have just made, if you knew all, you could not but expect from me; but my object is not to revive past griefs of my own: but to guard the future of another from similar danger. I own that while exacting candour from you, concealment on my part comes with an ill grace; but my demand is founded upon a desire to secure a happy future to her whom you profess to love, and for whom alone I now live. My own silence arises from an anxious

wish to spare a recital, which you might think injurious to the memory of one whom we are equally bound to guard from reproach. Yes, my Lord, strange as it may appear to you, there was another person in whom we were mutually deeply interested. At a future time, perhaps, if you require it, I shall be bound to be explicit; but now I conjure you by your professed attachment, by your desire to have your own doubts removed, proceed with your own explanation."

Castleton, when so adjured, proceeded at once to recount his early admiration of Lucy; and he detailed with so much unaffected candour the motives which had induced him a second time to visit Bankside Farm; and he dwelt with so much fervour upon the still increasing force of his passion, as he became better acquainted with its object; and the whole was urged in that soft winning manner, so like

one which his auditress had formerly known to be resistless; that any previous unfavourable impression was soon removed from Alice's mind; most willing, as she was, to be convinced of his sincerity.

By this means he soon acquired a most powerful advocate, had it been necessary, in his favour with Lucy; but before they had completely arranged the manner in which he should proceed towards the accomplishment of his object, a bustle in the passage below announced, as they rightly imagined, the return of Lucy herself.

As Castleton had already recounted to Alice Darnell the shock that his unexpected apparition in court had caused to her niece, she prudently recommended that he should not again present himself to her till she had herself ascertained whether the poor girl's nerves had yet recovered from the agitation they had expe-

rienced. With this view, beseeching him to await her return where he then was, she went out to meet her niece, with the intention of communicating with her first in her own room, before she informed her who was there awaiting her: and it was fortunate that she so decided, for she found Lucy in a much worse state than she had anticipated. Her delicate frame, and soft and sensitive nature, were not calculated to sustain any great nervous excitement. Her mental faculties, clear and just as they generally were, and adequately sustained, under ordinary circumstances, by the constant desire to be right herself and to do wrong to no one, wanted nevertheless that practical energy which might support them in any extraordinary trial. She had for many hours fought against the weakness of her nature, in striving to go successfully through the effort of her examination; and the last shock, — the apparition,

as she thought, of Churchill, had completely upset her.

The delay in her return from the court had been caused by a succession of fainting-fits, in the intervals of which her intellects had been far from settled. She had been attended, in a waiting-room, by the best medical adviser of the place, who happened to be in court; and after a conveyance had been procured to remove her home, he had recommended that, upon returning there, all agitating subjects should be avoided, and the most perfect quiet rigidly enforced during the rest of the day.

These transactions were explained to Alice in a few words by her brother, before he returned into court to hear George's fate, the uncertainty about which, he could not help thinking, was the main cause of his daughter's indisposition. The aunt, therefore, accompanied her charge to her own back-room, and darkening

it as much as possible, persuaded her to stretch herself on the bed. Lucy knew her aunt perfectly, and tacitly complied with her desire; but, as far as could be gathered from the low mutterings that continued at intervals, her faculties seemed still confused. All this time, Castleton remained in the place where he had been left by Alice, fixed like a statue, afraid to stir, lest the least motion on his part should disturb the invalid; bitterly regretting his own inconsiderate appearance in court, and venting reproaches on his own head, which, but that the same fear which kept him stationary checked his utterance, would have been as loud as they were heartfelt.

At length Alice slowly opened the intermediate door, and putting her finger on her lip, whispered —

" I think she sleeps now. She is still far far from composed, and it would be quite im-

possible that she should be fit to see you to-day; nor, indeed, do I think it ought to be risked at all, till I have had an opportunity of first explaining much to her, if such occasion should recur on her partial recovery. How much have I authority from you to say?"

"Say all—every thing—you cannot possibly say enough; for words were never coined that could express all I feel."

"Hush," interrupted Alice; "I hear her voice again, and I think repeating your name. Step softly this way; and if she repeats it again, as she did but now, no explanation I could give to the question you asked me could be one half so satisfactory;" and she placed him just within the doorway of the obscure apartment.

"Aunt Alice," called Lucy from the bed. "Aunt Alice; quick, dear aunt. Hast seen him? where is he? and why is the morn-

ing so dark — so dismal dark? when he's come back, so gay too, on purpose to marry me. I knew he couldn't have it in his heart to die, when he loved me so; and I'm sure I'd rather have died a thousand deaths myself, than that he should so have perished."

There was more even in the tone with which these words were uttered, than in the disjointed and incoherent sentences themselves, which confirmed Castleton in his conviction that he was beloved. And so Alice Darnell construed what she heard; for, as she again motioned him to retire, she said;

" You cannot surely, my dear Lord, have any more questions to ask of me now. If you have, trust to my ready-getting answers for you before to-morrow. She must have rest and quiet now; but with these all will soon be well again. The ills that spring from a surfeit of happiness, may in this world be left

to their own cure; while there are scars that misfortune has graven, which any casual coincidence may re-open, and no time can completely heal. Good b'ye, my d ar Lord; and in the midst of your own happiness, think again of what you proposed to do for my poor nephew George."

Lord Castleton having, in the course of his explanation to Alice, in which he had candidly confessed his dislike that his connexion with the smuggling transactions should be published to the world, intimated his intention of providing for George in a manner that should be satisfactory to all his family.

CHAPTER XIV.

Oh, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes!

SHAKSPEARE.

ALICE DARNELL had made good and sufficient use of the interval left her, to execute the task of explaining the past, and opening the future to the parties concerned. For before that time next day, she had succeeded in clearing the coast, not only of her brother, but, what was perhaps more difficult, of her nephew George, whose acquittal the day before upon both charges, had, thanks to the clumsiness of

Mr. Spencer, been complete. With some little difficulty Alice had persuaded him, as well as his uncle, that it would be better for them to keep out of the way; and Castleton had been for some time established with Lucy, in undisturbed possession of the little lodging-house parlour.

Whilst he was opening to her, by degrees, the brilliant prospects which he proposed to her to share with him, she sat on the sofa beside him, holding one hand in both of hers, and looking up at him with an expression of innocent adoration, such as could only be pourtrayed upon a countenance of such unrivalled sweetness. As, after detailing his views for their own future, he turned to describe what he proposed to do for the different members of her own family, she interrupted him with—

"Oh, my dear Lord! but that you are even much more good than great, I should wonder

at your kindness to poor George, not only to bear him no ill-will for daring to lift his lowly hand against your life, but even to propose to serve him so effectually, and exactly in the way he would like best. To procure him a birth in a king's ship, by which, in time, he may become an admiral, for George is very clever in that line, though rude and unlettered in others—think of that, aunt Alice!" addressing her aunt, who had then entered the room, which she occasionally quitted. "Think of that, that George may live to be an admiral, and all through the kind forgiving goodness of my own dear Lord here," added she, pressing his hand, which she held against her heart, and then dropping her head, and looking up timidly from under her brows, as if she thought she had been too demonstrative; then turning the subject, she said, "But George is to go away then, to-day? and didn't he wish to see me?"

"Yes, he shall see you, when my Lord is obliged to go and arrange his other necessary matters," replied Alice; part of whose plan was, in every possible way to avoid flurry to her niece, whose spirits were hardly yet settled. She therefore decided that she should not see more than one person at a time; and, as restored composure was her great object, she determined, that least of all ought Lucy to see Castleton and George together.

Lord Castleton, whose intimate friend had just taken the command of a frigate commissioned for Halifax, and under sailing orders, had written the strongest recommendation of George, begging his friend to take him as a supernumerary midshipman, and, if occasion should occur, to promote him. As it is not always necessary to analyze motives for liberal actions, so, certainly, no one of the parties who were to benefit either directly or otherwise by

this recommendation, estimated how much the peculiar value of the arrangement, in Lord Castleton's eyes, was enhanced, by the ship taking so immediate a departure for so distant a station.

Alice Darnell had, upon a consideration of all the bearings of the case, been disposed to acquiesce in what was rather the suggestion offered, than the condition proposed by Lord Castleton, that the marriage should be strictly private; and that, indeed, it need never be exactly known what had been the previous condition in life, where the previous residence, of his future wife. She was as much justified by her own early experience of the great world, as she was guided by her partiality for her niece, in imagining, that there was a natural unaffected grace in Lucy's manner, which would prevent her former very humble state from being suspected, if not promulgated. Her

early recollections of the world, at the same time, served to remind her that, if that humble origin was known, defects, supposed inseparable from it, would be imagined, even though they did not exist.

On the other hand, concealment on this head, if desirable, was rendered peculiarly practicable, from the utter solitude in which Lucy had been brought up, never having had even an acquaintance out of her own thinly-scattered and secluded neighbourhood. Her brother, too, Alice felt, however well calculated to fill with credit the state to which he was born, would be unfit, as he would be unwilling, to be placed in any other; and his wife, however willing she might be to make the experiment, would be infinitely more unfit than Richard Darnell to accompany her daughter into that exalted sphere in which she was now to move.

Alice Darnell could not help rejoicing that the absence of her sister-in-law upon this occasion, removed any difficulty that might have been expected from her not being so well aware as every body who was acquainted with her was, how impossible it would be that she should share with Lucy all the advantages of her new situation.

"I should have thought," said Alice, addressing Castleton, "that you of all men would have been least likely to persuade me to overlook all the ills that sometimes spring from mystery in the married state. But mystery, where it affects the character of the connexion to be formed, or where it only relates to circumstances which that connexion itself supersedes, is quite distinct; and therefore I am inclined to agree with you, that it is better the marriage should take place here privately, and

as soon as the special licence can be procured, that when my brother and I return home, we may announce it to her mother as an event completed."

This being settled, Castleton said to Lucy, "I must leave you now to take steps for the licence. Farewell for the present, and only for the *present*, for it is a word that the future shall teach *us* to forget to use."

Castleton having left the room, Alice desired George to come in, to take leave of his cousin, as he was to depart that afternoon. He was dressed in a manner better calculated to suit his new character of gentleman; but never looked so awkward, or seemed so little at his ease. He walked first straight for the window, then half towards Lucy, but turned to the fireplace, and from thence back to the window, without saying a word. From thence he was

gently drawn away by his cousin, who said, "Come, dear cousin George, have you nothing pretty to say to your poor little Lucy? I am sure I wish *you* joy of your promotion with all my heart."

"And I am as sure that in all mine, there is no other wish than that your promotion, if you like so to call it, may be attended with every earthly happiness. Perhaps I 'd better go at once. Good b'ye."

"Nay stay, dear George, it is not enough that we should separate with these wishes, without settling how we may be informed whether they are fulfilled or not. I can never forget those days, when we neither of us ever formed a thought that the other didn't know; and believe me, till we meet again, I shall have no greater pleasure than hearing from you, and how you are getting on;—and now you

may put a direction that will easier reach its mark, than poor Lucy Darnell, Bankside Farm, England. Wasn't that the way you wrote to me last, you said? You'll try again, won't you, dear?"

"No, I think I'd better not; it wouldn't be altogether suitable, I think, with your new situation. When you get accustomed to all these fine folk, there will be much in George Darnell you'll wish altered; and I shouldn't like to bring shame on you, Lucy."

"Bring shame on me! that you could never do, but by such courses as you have lately followed; and to these I have no fear you will turn again. Do not bring shame on yourself by such means, and you can never bring shame on me. If you mean that, because I'm a lady, shame could spring from the homeliness of true and tried affection, that would be shame

of my own making; ay, and worse than I could bear."

"Ay, you speak all this out of kindness, and like yourself, dear Lucy: and so you feel now, I'm sure. But a time will come—and what's more, it ought to come—when the less you see, or even perhaps hear of me, the better. I will not bring up now all about our former parting, and all that. I was much older than you were then, and things you said made more impression on me than they were like to do on yourself; but it's all for the best. He that's won you, has done his taste credit, to find you out, quite out of his line as you were, and I'm bound to speak well of him, for he's behaved nobly to me; and I've no doubt he'll try and make you happy, and he ought to succeed, for he's plenty of helps to try with; but all I can say is, that you can't want to hear of ME, and I shouldn't like to intrude."

"Why shouldn't I want to hear of you? You talk of the helps he has, by which I suppose you mean power and wealth. But what would be one's first wish to put them to, but to assist one's friends? And who would be the first of friends whom one would seek out at the end of the world to serve? Why, who but you, dear George."

"Ay, all that 's as you feel now; and I don't mean to say that any change could ever make you hard or unfeeling, but I can't but think that it an't in nature that this should always remain the same. I dare say you judge me a little altered now; so I am, perhaps. I have turned more things over in my head lately, than I did in all my life before. A prison 's quite the school of thought. You 're going, on t'other hand, to one perpetual holiday of the mind,—and every thing

else if you like. It will be an existence of which you 've no idea. Well! it mayn't suit after all. But if so, it 's no short voyage you 're bound on. You 'll never have Bankside Farm and Morden Bay to leeward again; and, therefore, you had better not have cousin George to pilot your thoughts the way they must never turn. But as it 's much more like you 'll find all sunshine around you, I would not like to be the one black spot on your horizon; and when not in sight, you must soon forget to care about the humble playmate of your youth, who feels even in parting from you so completely that your unhappiness must make his, that he heartily prays that this last may be the case. Prosper in your new line of life, and that you may do so, take not with you a thought of your old one. Once more, a long good b'ye."

"Good b'ye, dearest George," said Lucy, throwing herself for the last time into his arms.

"No, Lucy; that 's more than I can bear," cried George, tearing himself away, and rushing from her presence.

CHAPTER XV.

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
Ran on the greensward; nothing she does or seems,
But smacks of something greater than herself,
Too noble for this place.

SHAKSPEARE.

The best maker of all marriages
Combine your hearts in one, your states in one!

"COME, lassie," said Farmer Darnell as he entered, and found her still in tears. "Come, that 'll be only a sunsh*oi*ny shower I guess, without which they say our hopes never ripen; but your's are all fit for harvesting; so, cheer up, cheer up, my darling child."

"Oh! father, it 's more than a passing sor-

row parting with one's earliest friend. I am not ungrateful for the great bounties shown me; and to think that the noblest, the handsomest, the best of men, should have condescended like to seek me, when I 'm sure there 's not a high-born lady amongst whom he 's lived, but must have been only too happy if he 'd have turned his eyes on any one of them! Yet, I 've just seen, perhaps, the last of George. I shall soon also be separated from you; and what I lose seems all as strange to me as what I gain. I see the sudden end of every feeling and thought of which I cannot recollect the beginning. I would, I feel, at the same time willingly die in grateful adoration of him who is only much too great and good for me; but it comes in some sort to this, for so completely new an existence has something in it of the character of death."

"Nay, my bonny bairn," said her father;

"take it not in *sicke* a fasheous style. It comes sair to me 'tis true, to part wi' that has been my sole fireside comfort since it first *supped* pap—since it first climbed upon my knee, by thrusting its little fingers into t' button-holes. But for thee, my child, you've only gettin now a station you were always fitter to hold than to boide wi' the loike o' us. I can't quite make it clear why it should be so; it were the same wi' Alice afore you. You and she are quite another guess sort o' class from your mither and me. It's agin all the rules of breeding stock that so it should be; but so it is, and that's a' that I know."

"But, my dear father, my heart tells me of no such distinction; and won't let me think of parting from you without such a pang here, as teaches me that 'tis to you I truly belong."*

"As to parting, and all that, my dear child, it's not a church-yard separation to which

we're bound to resign ourselves. But it's along wi' Alice I 've been settling that I should make but a rummish concern of it in t' great world. And it 's not any pride, or any thing of that kind, of my Lord's that would come atwixt us. No, nothing has been kinder like than your Lord has been. And he 's just been talking it 'ower out there, and how he would never wish you to forget the best of fathers. That 's what he called me. And when I thought of you, and heard him say so, if he 'd made me a lord like himself, I could not have been prouder than of that title. And he added that he 'd make it his care a year should never pass without your coming somehow or other to see us; and that showed his consideration like. But, lord, when I thought it was a question of once a year or so, wi' a *somehow or other* tacked to it, I could not but feel like an auld hen that reared a ducklin, and saw the great waters

afore her, into which she mun never follow her. And here I stand cackling like just such another auld fool, instead of being thankful for all favours, as I should be. And after all, when I make myself out a hen, it 's your mother's part I 'm taking of. And she do cackle sometimes, sure enough."

"As you mention my mother, I must say, my dear father, that I hope you and aunt Alice won't have me married, as I heard you settling, without her being brought over. For though I cannot say that in all respects it is quite as much pain to be separated from her as from you, my own kindest father; yet, if it is a brilliant, it is a strange, and to all concerned, a somewhat perilous career on which I am about to enter; and what safeguard so good at such a moment as to have asked and deserved a mother's blessing."

"Why that's a' true enough, and pretty and

like yourself to think so; but it were to spare a power o' fash she'd mak, that we settled it t'other way. That is, it were your aunt, she promised me it should be all her doing. For it were not like I should take it on myself, and to gang back there all alone afterwards. But here's sister, talk it over wi' she."

But when Alice found her niece make such a point of her mother's presence, she did not think herself justified in adhering to her first arrangement; she therefore proposed that her brother should write to her, and should offer to go as far as Mayton, to meet her; but this part he seemed to have particular reasons of his own for disliking.

"What! meet she at Mayton? that would-n't be altogether quite suitable. Stop at Queen's Head! Bide at the widow's till she came there to find me out! No, sister, I don't see why I should gi' up my share of the last

days o' my darling child, along o' she. There are coaches fra' Mayton here, let her take one o' they.

As this suggestion seemed reasonable enough, it was not opposed; and as Castleton, however much he might deprecate Mrs. Darnell's presence, could not but honour Lucy's scruples, he made no objection, only hoping still that she might not come; which wish seemed more likely to be gratified from the somewhat obscure nature of Farmer Darnell's communication, which ran thus:

"Respected Wife,

"This comes first to let you know George is gitten well shot of his bad job, and now he 's gone to better himself; next to require your presence at this presint, as soon as evrey bit quait convenient. I 've considered you 'd loike to see t' gude looks has comed to Lucy, sine

we comed here; she's now the most beautiful prospect ony one ever seed; and she's quoite fit to be married ony day, she thinks, if you'd only come. I can't enter into ony more particular observations by reason of the post knowing it, only this; you'll find curb bridle for t' poney on a broken peg behind door in t' cowshed; put him on a crupper, for there's a tail about his tumbling down wi' Joe Ostler on Langden bank. But you'll plaise to call to mind purticklar that t' Angel is the house at Mayton, from which stage coach starts.

"Your fond sarvant and humble husband
to command, RICHARD DARNELL."

As Richard Darnell, in writing this letter, had his own misgivings that some of the words might not be spelt exactly right, he thought it best no one but himself should see it, and therefore put it himself into the post without

showing it to any one, only letting them know that he had written a letter, which he felt sure would bring the good woman. But as soon as she could be expected, instead came the following answer:

"RICHARD DARNELL,

"You must be clean demented to send me such a daft epistle. If the name had never been on t' bottom, I should have guessed it could but have been your 'n; for it's just of a piece wi' all the rest. As for George being cleared of this sad affair, it's right to be thankfull for any sinner that's spared. But where, pray, is he gone? To better himself, you say! If he's really minded in penitence to better himself, and I'm sure there's need on't, only let me take him in hand, there's no need of his going vagabonding again for that. As for what you say about Lucy, I knew how it

would be, you'd be sure to spoil her. I'm not going to tramp after her, to see her good looks, as you call it. If she can't come to me, let her gang her ain gait, and not expect her elders to fash themselves about the like of she. I don't make out what you mean by her having getting good looks: if it's only her foolish pretti-ness you commend, as I suppose by your say-ing she's the most beautiful prospect ever seen, I'd have you to recollect, that when you were i'that city afore, you thought some one else the most beautiful prospect you ever seed. Though I'm thankful I never set my head o' such vani-ties. But it's like you, a *cretur* made up of hand and mouth, ever whilst you live to think all's best that's by you. I'll be bound the truest thing that's in your letter is, that the silly chit thinks herself fit to be married. If so, let her be so without me. I thought not long ago she'd been ready to demean herself

by throwing herself at the head of Painter Churchill. If so, as I said afore, it 's all her ain affair.

"This from your loving wife,

"MARGARET DARNELL.

"Postscript. It was so like you to put best bridle on broken peg in t' cowshed. But it 's just of a piece wi' all the rest."

When Farmer Darnell had spelt through this somewhat lengthy, though unsatisfactory reply, he saw that he had somehow made a mess of it, and he did not feel quite certain whether he had sufficiently explained his daughter's marriage as a fact, not as a surmise. He took it, full of perplexity, to his sister, who not having seen her brother's, to which this was an answer, never suspected that in point of fact it had never been clearly explained that it was to witness the great alliance of her daughter she

was summoned; and as she knew enough of the unhappy and worrying temper of her sister-in-law, to think it possible from the first an ungracious answer might be returned, she therefore thought it best that her mother's declining to come should be communicated to Lucy, omitting those details in her answer which might be hurtful to her feelings. And this plan suited the impatience of Castleton, and the inclinations of the farmer; and therefore it was settled that the wedding should be no longer postponed.

It was a gay-looking morning, in early spring, which shone auspiciously on the happy scene, when the select family circle, to whom alone the secret had been confided, sought the parish church of St. ——, in the city of ——, armed with the special licence, which in due form permitted the union of the Right Honourable Egbert Athelstan Somers Lord Castleton to Lucy Darnell.

Though no high-born kindred crowded round the altar, or lightly tripped, or swept in state up the empty aisles, which struck chill and damp upon the little party as they first quitted the light and buoyant atmosphere without; yet in the whole line of Lord Castleton's ancestry, even including that progenitor who had won a stately dame, through whom, as his name denoted, was traced his descent to the heptarchy —never had any of his forefathers led to the altar a more lovely object, or one in outward appearance more distinguished and refined, than the lowly maid who now clung anxiously to him for support.

The wedding-robe which she wore had been chosen by him, and though simple was tasteful; and her aunt's care had prevented any glaring defects in the mode of wearing it, which her unpractised ignorance might otherwise have betrayed; though her toilet was a task which

the perfect proportion of her slight and elegant form rendered easy. The delicate and finely chiseled contour of her features, and the unstudied grace of her whole figure, even to the tapering fingers of the small hand, whose gentle pressure on Lord Castleton's arm seemed to claim protection—all these marked her as fitted to adorn that exalted station to which she was then to be raised.

The quiet dignity of Alice Darnell's whole deportment showed her a fitting chaperon on such an occasion for the future peeress. To be sure, the honest farmer, though dressed in his very best, did not seem quite of a piece with the other performers in the ceremony; but nobody could feel this more thoroughly than he did himself; and so unaffectedly, as to be compatible with great pride in his daughter, and no shame for himself; and therefore he kept in the back-ground, exulting yet retiring.

As Lucy knelt at the altar, unconsciously in an attitude which sculptors might have studied for the line of grace, Castleton fixed upon her an ardent gaze of unmeasured admiration, which, as the ceremony concluded, and they rose to depart, she repaid with the mild expression of intense devotion rather than of passion.

" God save your Ladyship!" cried Farmer Darnell, coming up and kissing her, trying to bury his feelings in a tone of banter, but in vain: — " God save you! Lady ——. Good b'ye, my own darling Lucy!" and he retired to gulp down his emotion. Her aunt also took leave of her here, to avoid the parting in the streets.

Castleton supported her trembling frame tenderly to the carriage; and, as soon as they had entered, pressed her to his heart, saying — " My own, own Lucy, now!" And as the car-

riage rattled rapidly through the narrow streets of the city, they were soon out of sight of the farmer and his sister, who had followed to the door of the church, to watch the departure of what they both loved best in the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

There
Shall sweet Bianca practise how to bride it.
SHAKSPEARE.

So this begins our happy honeymoon.

Honour, high honour, and renown to Hymen!

A HONEYMOON! 'Tis a strange term! — an ambiguous definition of the period of time which it describes: a singular compound of two incongruous parts — honey and moon. What has the moon, "the inconstant moon," to do with that whose "sweets do pall with sameness?" Is there any sly sarcasm conveyed in

the term ?—any lurking insinuation, that where a blessing has been "daily swallowed by men's eyes, they surfeited with honey;" and that, as the match-making Friar Lawrence says, "is loathsome in its own deliciousness?" But, no—it cannot be. When at sea for a meaning, one seeks the aid of a Dictionary to pilot one back to sense, and Johnson defines a honeymoon as "the first month after marriage, when there is nothing but tenderness and pleasure;" and as this lexicographical lover had tried it himself, he must have spoken from an experience of his own sensations,—for, with all the merits of his laborious compilation, he is never known to have given a signification in direct opposition to his own feelings and prejudices. It is a curious image this raises to one's mind—Doctor Johnson passing a whole month in which there was nothing but "tenderness and pleasure!"

For these sensations also must, to exist, have been reciprocal; he must have found another who would lavish similar tenderness on him,—derive parallel pleasure from him. And our wonderment increases that such should have been the impression which he chose to perpetuate in folio sheets for ever, when one recollects that he was married to a woman twice his own age; and as it is insinuated by one of his female gossips, he had begun by being in love with his future bride's daughter. Add to this, that his own account of his ride to church does not accord with the immediate prelude to a honied sequel. Johnson, about to become a bridegroom, in love, and on horseback, at one and the same time, is an image almost to upset gravity. He states that on their ride from Birmingham to Derby, they quarrelled two or three times about the pace, and says, "I was not to be made the slave of caprice,

and I resolved to begin as I meant to end; I therefore pushed on briskly till I was fairly out of her sight; I contrived that she should soon come up with me; when she did, I observed her to be in tears."

Here does not seem to have been much tenderness on his part, or one would think much pleasure on hers: but there is no disputing about tastes; and even after this unpropitious beginning, Johnson, upon experience, defines the honey-moon as "a month in which there is nothing but tenderness and pleasure." There have been, however, others not so well calculated to pamper themselves with such unalloyed lusciousness, who have found the taste of the honey infused with a well-known taint of bitterness; and others may have suspected that some of the wax had, in that honied space, somewhat clogged the wings of time. For, admitting to the fullest extent—

"Domestic happiness, the only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the fall;"

yet it is not the growth of an hour. It is not slipped on with the wedding-ring. At the altar the staple only is riveted, for which habit has yet to forge, link by link, those imperceptible bonds which chain the heart within the domestic circle. Mutual good understanding must be established by slow degrees. In the vegetable world a graft is an unsightly excrescence at first; and no more in temper and tastes, than in trees, is the fruit of such an experiment borne on the instant. How much tacit, perhaps unconscious, compromise must gradually be matured, before, as Thomson says—

"Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence;"

he pronounces—

"Happy they the happiest of their kind."

If, therefore, as I suspect, even amongst those who have afterwards experienced the most perfect domestic happiness, there have occasionally been in some of the four-and-twenty hours of some of the eight-and-twenty days of this mellifluous month some moments when slight restraint and transient disappointment have mixed themselves up with that tenderness and pleasure which are said to monopolise it; if it is a probationary period, which is not sufficient to establish the whole foundation of happiness for the future, it is sometimes quite sufficient to dispel some of the bright illusions of the past; this variegated month will sometimes make sad inroads into the permanence of that sort of love that—

> "Is but a bright beguiling spell,
> Which only lives whilst passion glows."

The passion of love sometimes revels in contradiction. It gains strength by opposition;

it attracts by separation; it smiles most upon its exacted sacrifices; it entrenches itself most behind broken duties; its fairest hopes are gathered in the wildest field of fear, but its vigour is apt to be lost in regular set garden culture; it pines upon stated indulgence; it dwindles when its shoots are in set form nailed to the wall; when its early blossom is success, its only fruit is satiety.

If there ever was a blissful honey-moon! If?—There have been myriads; those of a mixed character, for which I have been endeavouring to account, are but the exceptions. In the very first class of blissful honey-moons, was that of Castleton and Lucy;—most happy positively, in its exemptions from any of the causes which I have mentioned as occasionally chequering that happiness: and most happy comparatively, with their mutual experience of the past: and I fear I must forestall so far as

to add, also comparatively with their future wedded life. Here there was no unsettled compromise of tastes, no gradual adaptation of former habits; for the companion was no more new to Lucy, than was the existence to which she had been transferred. The very atmosphere she breathed was strange to her; and in entering upon that new existence, she had but one all-engrossing object—to study in her own manner the happiness of him to whose destiny she was united.

Castleton was by nature affectionate; but he must have been insensible indeed, if he had not shared with more fervour, and almost equal freshness, every feeling of one so beautiful and so gracious, so tender and so devoted, as his gentle bride. Besides, he had another security against her fondness palling upon possession, if such a thing could otherwise have been possible. It was an original experiment he had

attempted, so far successful, whose future progress he had to watch; and this blended occupation with his enjoyment. And there was certainly occupation enough in explaining many rudiments of conduct in her present sphere, of which Lucy was completely ignorant. Anxious as she was to learn, and eager as she was to adopt, any suggestion of his, in spite of her natural quickness, he sometimes found it difficult to make her comprehend his meaning, from some ideas being perfectly new to her, which were so interwoven with his early nature that he could not recollect and identify their first impression. Castleton being, himself, a person of very cultivated mind, and having been much in a society famed for ready memory and apt illustration, had adopted, perhaps more than any one else, a sort of short-hand turn of conversation, a comprehensive cypher, known only to the initiated; in which

a half-hinted allusion, or trite quotation, was often meant to awaken a whole train of ideas: such an inclination he was, of course, obliged to check in all his communications with Lucy. This made his instructions often much more circumlocutory, and consequently protracted, than they would otherwise have been; and though it was impossible to imagine a more gentle tutor, or a more docile pupil, yet even blended as it was with the soft dalliance of those first days of exclusive devotion, there was something irksome to both parties, in the perpetual recurrence of such topics.

Instruction, however mildly conveyed, infallibly destroys that feeling of equality, in exact proportion to which confidence is generally found to exist. Every day Castleton felt more and more how impossible it would be to ask Lucy's opinion on any of those subjects on which she was profoundly ignorant; and every

day Lucy became more aware of her deficiencies, and more anxious therefore to conceal them from him; and that she could only do by acquiescing in her ignorance, for there was no one else from whom she could seek information. There were some points on which she would even have endeavoured to extract knowledge from the servants; but dreading, from her former habits, nothing so much as too great a familiarity in this respect, Castleton had made it one of his first desires to her, that she would confine her communications with them, to asking for what she wanted. To this, as to every other desire of his, she yielded, as far as she could, implicit obedience; but it was often a great exertion on her part to do so. Of her own maid she had felt from the first a considerable awe; and to such a degree did this continue, that she could not conceive any fatigue from labour equal to the burthen of her

assistance. Being naturally of a disposition both active and obliging, it was quite new to her to have any thing done for her which she could do for herself. For some time she had as great a horror of touching a bell-rope, as others have in touching the string of a shower-bath; and when services were obtruded on her by the domestics as a matter of course, she had much difficulty in checking the exuberance of her gratitude.

At home, Big Betsey, mentioned above as the maid of all work, never considered as any part of her multitudinous duties the waiting on Miss Lucy, who she not only said "mought moind herself," but sometimes called to her, almost authoritatively, to "lend a hauping haund." It was, probably, in consequence of the habit thus engendered, that Lady Castleton was one day caught "lending a helping hand" to an overloaded under laundry-maid, who

had been sent by her superior with a wicker-bound snowy freight of her Ladyship's own superfine linen. But of all the irksome feelings caused by Lucy's new position, there was none from which she suffered more, than *waiting* to be *waited on*. And it was hinted in the hall, that when my Lord was not in the room, my Lady got up to help herself to what she wanted from the sideboard!! And it was whispered in the female conclave of the housekeeper's room, that her Ladyship seemed even to like to—lace her own stays!!

CHAPTER XVII.

I would detain you here some
Month or two before you venture.

How often have I told you 't would be thus,
How often said my dignity would last
But till 't were known.

Set on towards London.

SHAKSPEARE.

IT had been a *real* Spring-day, by which we mean one not often realized, but such a Spring-day as even smoke-dried poets fancy. Lucy was seated in her own pretty boudoir, which Castleton had arranged for her with infinite taste. She was making-up and combining with great care a nosegay of choicest flowers, which

she had gathered from the neighbouring conservatory, into which on one side her apartment opened; with this she was decorating a beautiful marble vase, presented to her by her husband, which always stood on the table beside her. Castleton had been absent that morning on a distant ride, on business connected with his property; she had previously been interrupted, and was now anxious, before his return, to finish this trivial, but to her interesting occupation: for the vase never met her husband's eye, studded with its varied scents and gaily diversified colours, without eliciting the observation, "No one could arrange these half so prettily as you." And it required to be aware, as she was, of her manifold deficiencies, to feel the peculiar pleasure derived in hearing the repetition of these words from the lips she loved. She was still thus engaged, when Castleton entered, and throwing himself on the

sofa beside her, interrupted her task by taking one of her hands in his, pressing his palm against hers—then tenderly parting her fingers, by entwining his own between them; whilst, passing his other arm round her waist, he drew her towards him, and looking fondly in her face, said to himself, "They must, at any rate, have thought her very beautiful."

The origin of this reflection was, that on coming home by the high-road he had met his nearest neighbour, Mrs. Eresby, with her two daughters, returning from a visit they had during that morning volunteered to the bride. On perceiving him, Mrs. Eresby had stopped the carriage for a moment, and after expressing regrets at missing him, had said, "Charmed with Lady Castleton—so very natural and perfectly unaffected."

In bowing, the only possible reply to this compliment, he thought he had intercepted the

telegraph of a smile between Miss Eresby and her sister Arabella, who sat opposite to each other on the side of the carriage into which he was leaning.—"Very natural and perfectly unaffected!" he thought, as he rode home, "What has she been doing?" Certainly, if there was any quality which Castleton must have most sought to secure by such means as he had resorted to in the choice of a wife, it must have been that she should be "natural and unaffected." And yet it is true that this testimony of the first person who had seen her to the success of his pursuit, gave him any thing but pleasure.—"So you have had visitors this morning, Lucy; how did you amuse them?"

"Oh, they seemed to amuse each other very well; there were three of them."

"How do you mean, amuse themselves? they did not, surely, talk to each other much before you?"

"Her the others called mother didn't."

"My dear Lucy, I'm sure they never called her *mother*."

"Well then, mamma perhaps it was; I will remember, my dear Lord, what you told me never to say mother."

"And did they make many enquiries of you? ask many questions?"

"Oh, such a many!"

"So many, dearest love, you mean to say."

"Well, so I do, thank you; and then the mamma asked me, as she had never seen me before, if I had not been much abroad; and I said, never at all till I married; and then she said, 'What! had I been to Paris since?' and I find she meant foreign parts by abroad. And she told me that we ought to go to London soon; that the season was advanced, and that the Pasta would come out soon this spring. What is the Pasta—a plant?"

"A plant! no, love. Pasta is a singer's name, you could not be expected to know that; but I hope you didn't say any thing to show them your ignorance?"

"Oh, no; you told me, whenever I was completely puzzled, that silence was best; so I said nothing. Pasta's the name of a singer, then! Oh, that accounts, for a moment after she the mamma said, that her daughter Arabella sang delightfully, and asked me if I would sing with her; so I said no, I'd much rather listen. That was right, warn't it? You see I knew you'd ask me all about it, so I recollected it for you. Arabella then asked me if I would accompany her? so I said, Wherever she liked,—where did she want to go? But, I suppose, she altered her mind, for she sat down to the grand instrument you had brought here for me to begin my lessons upon; and then she sang such an extraordinary song — all

coming from her throat. And the sister asked me if I understood German? and I answered, No, nor French neither."

"That was an unnecessary addition, my love."

"Well, so it was. Then the youngest sister explained to me, that it was a song a Swiss peasant girl sang whilst she was milking her cow; and I said that must be very difficult, to sing while milking a cow. And then the mamma asked how I knew; and I said I had *tried* very *often*."

"How could you, dear Lucy, volunteer such an avowal?"

"I thought you would be afraid of that; but it all did very well, for the mother said I was so amusing, had so much natural wit, and they all tried to persuade me I had said something clever."

"Well, go on — and what then?"

"And then the lady took me aside, and began saying so much in praise of you; and when she once got me on that subject, I was ready and glib enough, I warrant you. But somehow, though I then found it so much easier to speak, I find it more difficult to recollect exactly what I said. Is not that strange? And then she said that my happiness would excite so much envy in the great world; that you had been admired, courted, nay, even loved by rich, noble, clever ladies. Why was all this? and how could you ever, think to leave all these, to seek out from her quiet home your poor little Lucy?"

"Oh, that's a story of by-gone days. These were follies of my youth, which I thought I had lived to repent.

'Nor knew, till seated by thy side,
My heart in all save hope the same.'

"Why, save hope, my dear Lord? What may you not only hope, but trust, from my constant devotion?

"I did not mean to tie myself precisely to every word I uttered. It was only a quotation.

"And what is a quotation?"

"A quotation is the vehicle in which imagination posts forward, when she only hires her Pegasus from memory. Or sometimes it is only a quit-rent, which the intellectual cultivator, who farms an idea, pays to the original proprietor; or rather,"—(seeing that he was not making the matter more intelligible by his explanation,)—"or rather, it is when we convey our own thoughts by the means of the more perfect expressions of some favourite author."

"But then, surely *you* need not be driven to borrow, whose own words always sound to me like a book. As for poor me, I wish I could

talk in quotations for ever; then I need not fear to make these mistakes, which, as it is, I am afraid I am always like to do."

There was so much modesty, so lively a sense of her own deficiencies, with so anxious a desire to remedy them, that Castleton could not, upon the whole, derive other than a pleasant impression from the result of this interview.

It has been said that Lucy's boudoir had been furnished in a manner that showed the most studied care in the selection, the most unlimited expenditure in the profusion of articles of luxury. Perhaps Castleton had even rather exceeded in this respect, from knowing how different had been the habits of her early life, and rather wishing that she should, whilst they were still alone, get over the trouble of being at her ease, rather than let the world witness the awkwardness of her

first impressions, and the difficulty of her you endeavour not to be astonished at so much and was new.

But there was one department to which he had prudently devoted his attention, and this from a higher motive, an anxious desire to cultivate the taste of his pupil-bride, in manner which might be an enjoyment, not a task. Her room had been hung with the choicest "*chefs-d'œuvre*" both of ancient and modern art: the most attractive subjects, treated in the most skilful manner, in an assortment of cabinet pictures of various masters. This, at least, thought Castleton, is an art for which she has shown a wonderful aptitude: poetry I cannot as yet hope that she should fancy or comprehend; and of any incipient love of general literature I as yet see no symptom; but this is a taste which cannot fail to refine such a character as hers. From

talk to him—from Poussin she may learn that poetical association will adorn and idealize even the material beauties of nature; and from the good conception of some historical subject by the great Italian masters, she may reverse the usual routine, and from admiration of the manner in which these subjects are treated, derive a taste for the subjects themselves. Then, thought he, I shall always have the agreeable reflection, that it was by me alone this taste was first formed, and that it was by a mutual partiality for this art that community of feeling was first established between us. Castleton had mistaken the effect for the cause; he was not aware, that whilst she had readily followed all the movements of the pencil, it was the hand that had guided it, not the lines that it traced, which had given it peculiar value in her eyes. Another morning he had been again absent on the business

which had taken him from home when you Mrs. Eresby's visit; and at the door of his boudoir he was met by Lucy, who had watched for his returning step, and, drawing him in after her with more than her usual demonstrations of delight at seeing him again, with a most triumphant "Look there!" directed his attention to the costly frames which, under his special direction, had been carefully fitted to the varied gems of art mentioned above, but which were, instead, now filled with flimsy drawings upon different coloured papers; and upon nearer inspection he discovered them to be his own hasty sketches, which had been thrown aside with the character he had assumed, and forgotten in the attainment of the object of that assumption.

"Lucy, you cannot really have been so foolish, so childish, as to remove those beautiful pictures for such wretched daubs as these?"

talk, he muttered hastily, and the look of triumph passed away at the same moment from Lucy's previously elated countenance, as, in a desponding tone, she "bade him see that the pictures were still there," and that she had occupied herself that morning in cutting with [illegible] and adapting the sketches to the different frames that hung round her room, which operation had been completed by neatly attaching the papers in each corner of the pictures with pins.

"Take them down again, for heaven's sake!" said Lord Castleton; "it is a bitter disappointment to me, to see you had no taste whatever for the beauties of these gems, which I selected for you with so much care, and which, at least, I hoped you might appreciate. I wish you would try, at least, to know the things you ought to admire."

"I am sure I always admired these," said

Lucy, sorrowfully, laying the rejected you
in a heap before Lord Castleton, and and b
to herself in a lower tone, "so pretty, and refl
like!" on observing the upper one of the hea
to be a home view of Bankside Farm, and it
old orchard and now deserted garden. F
her husband's good-humour was no e
by the gentle submission of her looks and manners; he took the sketches in his hand, and as
he turned them over rapidly, and as each and
every one in which Morden Bay was commemorated recalled the scene of some unpleasant
event, some degrading doubt, some unworthy
conflict, which he wished for ever to blot from
his own mind, and hide from the prying curiosity of others, with a sudden impulse he
crushed them firmly together in his hands, and
then flung them on the blazing fire before him.
Lucy at first started forward to save them, but
her habitual obedience and respect checked her

talk [illegible] movement. She gazed fixedly on [illegible] amazing memorials of her childhood home; and the first bitter tears she had shed since her marriage chased each other down her cheeks, as she exclaimed, "Oh, what a pity to destroy them! I loved them so, they were among [illegible] the very few things which reminded me of you and dear Bankside Farm together."

"Nay, do not distress yourself so, my dear Lucy You need, I hope, nothing to remind you of me, now I am always with you, and the rocks and the trees of Morden Bay, for it was only inanimate forms that were there commemorated, will remain the same till you see them again,—the same the last as the first time [illegible] beheld them. But it is the solitude in which you have been sometimes left lately which has made you gloomy. Business makes it necessary that I should soon go to London;

we will start next week,—then you too much occupied with seeing, and be seen, to have leisure for these morbid reflections."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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